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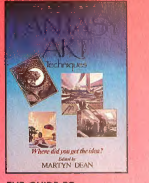

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On the Comics Scene

5 WORD BALLOONS
The game's afoot on another Baker Street.

6 THE SCENE
Funny animal a-go-go!

14 OK, IS MIKE BARR OVERWORKED?
He's sleuthing for "The Maze Agency!"

19 APE COMICS
They now rule Earth—are newsstands next?

28 PUNK MYSTERIES

On the Comics Screen

9 COLORS OF HIS LIFE
Dick Tracy sports new crimestopping shades.

24 FORGOTTEN TOONSTER
For Art Davis, Warners wasn't all "Merrie Melodies."

34 TURTLE TALK
Scripting a Mutant Ninja epic was a task for two.

41 ORPHANED ANNIE
There may be no tomorrow for the musical moppet

56 NATASHA DEAREST
Sally Kellerman brings the spy to life.

58 JUNE FORAY SPEAKS
Sometimes, she's Rocky or Granny, but always beloved.

63 AN ANIMATED LIFE
At 99, Grim Natwick is a Toontown legend.

69 THE REPORTER
Jetsons zoom!

45 SEEKING SQUALOR
If you've got the A-Time, First has the comic book.

50 LETTERING
Readers write!

53 ANOTHER GALAXY, ANOTHER DAY
Yet again, the Guardians vie for four-color stardom.

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WORD BALLOONS

Secretive Origins

In the beginning, right after creation, there was the search for credit. Who did what when? Was it the writer's idea and the artist improved it? Did the artist devise the character's name or just design his costume? What did the editor do and when did he do it? Did the publisher only sign the checks or something more? And how did the colorist change everything?

After some 30 years of serious attempts at documenting comics history, beginning in fanzines like *Xero* and *After-Ego* and continuing on through books, magazines, videotapes, the answers are...that there are no answers.

Of some facts, there seem to be no doubt. In 1924, Harold Gray created Little Orphan Annie, though, according to legend, it was Captain Joseph Patterson, editor of the Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, who suggested Annie be a girl instead of a boy. In 1931, Chester Gould created Dick Tracy, again working for Captain Patterson, who renamed the feature from its original *Plainclothes Tracy*. In 1933, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster created Superman (who would debut in 1938)—possibly influenced by Philip Wylie's novel *Gladiator* and Doc Savage (developed by writer Lester Dent based on a concept by Street & Smith's Henry W. Ralston).

These are three fairly simple cases—all well over a half-century old—but already, as you can see, creation as an individual or partnership act isn't so clear-cut. There are previous influences and editorial revisions which have an impact. And questions appear. Max Fleischer—as his son, director Richard Fleischer, reported last issue—"created Betty Boop" circa 1930, but animator Grim Natwick (see page 63) drew and designed her. Animation director Ben "Bugs" Hardaway introduced the character who would become Bugs Bunny in the 1938 "Porky's Hare Hunt," but subsequent directors Cal Dalton (who worked with Hardaway), Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng and especially Tex Avery, various writers, animators and voice master Mel Blanc refined the rabbit. So, who created Betty Boop and Bugs Bunny?

Contemporary comics—steeped in the tradition of giving proper credit—make things easier. Parodying *Ronin*, *Daredevil* and *X-Men*, Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird devised the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Mike W. Barr created *The Maze Agency* (see page 14). But the new *Planet of the Apes* comic? Look to the novel by Pierre Boulle, the film series derived from that (scripts by Rod Serling, Michael Wilson, Paul Dehn, Mort Abrahams and John William Corrington & Joyce Corrington)—not to mention the TV series, the cartoon show and Marvel's black & white comic—and the fact that these are new characters created by writer Charles Marshall, visualized by different artists (page 19). So, who created *this Planet of the Apes*? (And, with all that has gone before, does it matter?)

The examples could go on for pages, the debate, for decades. Who created Captain America (the delayed movie's early trade ads, since corrected, credited neither Joe Simon nor Jack Kirby!)? Or the Joker? Or Sgt. Rock?

Answers to that last question, at least, are available in a brand new monthly newsletter, *Robin Snyder's History of Comics* (edited & published, of course, by Robin Snyder, 255 N. Forest #405, Bellingham, WA 98225-5833; $2 per sample issue, $25/a year). Snyder has an ambitious goal, to create a working "oral history" of comics through testimony and evidence from (where possible) the people present at creation. The intriguing result allows creators like Steve Ditko, Robert Kanigher, Joe Kubert and Joe Gill to discuss heroes and heroics in a friendly forum. It's a great idea and a serious attempt to really determine throughout the history of comics, who did what when. And why.

—David McDonnell/Editor

COMICS SCENE RETURNS as the summer begins. **Gray Morrow** is on hand to remember his career as a fabulous artist of the fantastic...scribe **Max Allan Collins** also joins in, reviewing his plans for the **Dick Tracy** comic strip while helping preview the big-budget movie version. All this and a great deal more is in **COMICS SCENE #14, on sale June 26, 1990. MEANWHILE**, next month heralds the return of our *all-color* **COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR. Todd McFarlane** gets all webbed up explaining his devotion to chronicling **Spider-Man**'s exploits...**Gerard Christopher** flies high as the newest **Superboy**... and legendary artist **Neal Adams** discusses his life in the four-color world. Plus: eight fold-out posters! Look for **COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR #2 on sale May 22, 1990.**

COMICS SCENE

Dogs Art: By Moebius/Courtesy Steve Bissette

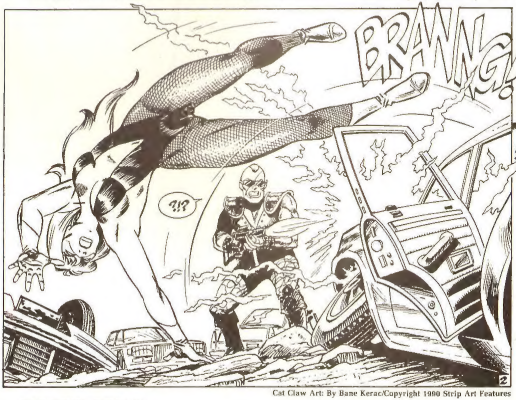
Rhudiprrt Art: By Teri S. Wood/Copyright 1990 Decker & Wood

Not All Dogs Go to Heaven

Looking at the cover of *Taboo* #4, Moebius fans might expect to find a terrifying tale of hell hounds inside, but they would only be barking up the wrong tree. They really have nothing to fear, though. Despite the dearth of devil dogs, Moebius (along with Alejandro Jodorowsky) still provides "The Eyes of the Cat" for the horror anthology's latest issue.

All Cats Go to...?

Cats have nine lives...*here*. And once they've used them all, they enter a *new* world, one where felines reign supreme and where, because of his love for his late pet, the dead Warren Schaefer now finds himself reincarnated as *Rhudiprrt, Prince of Fur*. Dwight R. Decker and Teri S. Wood explore this strange realm every other month in this black-and-white title from MU Press.



The Cat's Meow

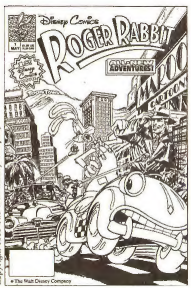
You know the Black Canary, She-Hulk, Phantom Lady, Red Sonja and all those other mighty heroines endowed with attributes far beyond those of mortal women? So does European writer/artist Bane Kerac, which is why he and Eternity Comics will be unleashing *Cat Claw* on unsuspecting American crooks as soon as they settle on a format.

Cat Claw Art: By Bane Kerac/Copyright 1990 Strip Art Features

Bugs Bunny Art: By Chuck Fiala & John Costanza
Bugs Bunny: Trademark & Copyright 1990 Warner Bros. Inc.

Knight of the Lepus

What's up, doc?!? How about a dastardly scheme that has its roots in Elmer Fudd's family tree? How about Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck being the only ones who can save the world? How about a three-issue *Bugs Bunny* mini-series by Joey Cavalieri, Chuck Fiala and John Costanza from DC with guest appearances by all those other looney Toons? Sufferin' succotash! Isn't that enough?



Roger Rabbit Art: By Rick Hoberg & Steve Leialoha
Copyright 1990 The Walt Disney Company

Rabbit Stew

Terrors in Toontown! Horrors in Hollywood! Weasels on wheels! You know, the sort of stuff a hard-working Toon had to deal with every day back in the '40s. And now that Maroon Cartoons is lending out their star player to Disney Comics, it's exactly what *Roger Rabbit* will have to face every month in his own series, often in more than one adventure per issue.

Hawkworld Art: By Graham Nolan/TM & Copyright 1990 DC Comics, Inc.

Birds of a Feather

The most dangerous man on Thanagar is loose on Earth, and it's up to the flying furies to bring him back for trial. But once they capture the shape-shifting Byth, will Katar Hol and Shayera Thal stay here or go home to roost on *Hawkworld*? Considering that Tim Truman, John Ostrander and Graham Nolan are letting the likes of old DC space villain Kanjar Ro return to ruffle their feathers, the winged wonders aren't likely to settle on either planet in their new ongoing comic.

What the Cat Dragged In

He used to be a cop. She used to be a crook. But now, thanks to Aircel Comics and writer Roland Mann and artists Mitch Byrd and Steven Butler, *Cat & Mouse* are the masked heroes of New Orleans. Unfortunately for them, neither the Mafia nor the Yakuza appreciate trouble-making do-gooders who have a habit of making off with money that lotsa gangsters worked long hours to get.

Cat & Mouse Characters: Copyright 1990 Mitch Byrd

Cat & Mouse Art: Mitch Byrd & Steve Butler

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City Scenes

Production designer Richard Sylbert paints the panels of Dick Tracy's world.

Dick Tracy is about apple pie. It's about honesty and decency and mom. It's not complicated. What *is* complicated is Chester Gould's vision of evil."

Sitting in his trailer on the Burbank Studios lot, where he is at work on Brian De Palma's forthcoming *Bonfire of the Vanities*, Oscar-winning production designer Richard Sylbert is attempting to explain the worldview of one of comicdom's most enduring syndicated strips. For Sylbert, this is much more than a trip down memory lane: Last June, he completed a lengthy stint on Walt Disney Pictures' multi-million dollar screen adaptation of Gould's comic strip, co-written, produced, directed by and starring Warren Beatty.

This is Sylbert's sixth motion picture with the actor/director, an association that began in 1960 when Sylbert was hired as art director on Elia Kazan's *Splendor in the Grass*; Beatty, then 22, was cast as the male lead opposite Natalie Wood. *Splendor* was followed by *Lilith*, then *Shampoo* (which Beatty produced and co-authored), *The Fortune* and *Reds*. (It was Sylbert's identical twin brother, Paul, who handled production design chores for Beatty's directorial debut, *Heaven Can Wait*; Richard was busy trying his hand as a production executive at the time.)

By KYLE COUNTS

Since winning the Academy Award for *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in 1967 (he has been nominated four other times), Sylbert has designed such films as *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Illustrated Man*, *Shoot to Kill* and *Tequila Sunrise*.

Sylbert remembers that "Dick Tracy was a big deal when I was a kid. He was a fascinating crime-fighter—an extremely decent, good-looking guy with chiseled features. People talked about him all the time, wondering what he was going to get into next, whether or not he would ever get married. Still, Dick Tracy wasn't the most interesting character in the strip. The bad guys—Flattop, Pruneface, the Blank—were the ones who held our attention. What made the strip work was Gould's absolute fascination with evil, a '30s expressionistic kind of evil."

Like all Beatty projects, *Dick Tracy* was a long time in the making. Sylbert recalls that Beatty was thinking about tackling a movie version of the strip at least as far back as 1984, about when Sylbert was finishing *The Cotton Club*. Said Sylbert at the time, "I think I've had enough machine guns to last the rest of my life," a statement uttered, he says, in the hopes that *Dick Tracy* wouldn't go into production right away. "And I was right—it didn't happen for another three years!" laughs the Brooklyn-born designer, who began his career in the early days of television. "We started the picture three different times, but Warren just wasn't getting there. Dick Benjamin fooled around with it [as director], Walter Hill spent five months on it [as director] at Universal—God knows who else. From Universal, it went to Paramount, who had it a long time. At that point, Warren was just going to act in it."

To Sylbert's dismay, the original script was set in 1928. "The bad guy, Dutch Schultz, had a brewery. Dick Tracy was a cop who was out to get these Prohibition gangsters. We decided to change the setting to early 1938. In 1938, there was no Prohibition, no beer; there was no war on. I knew there would have to be certain gangster cliches, like plenty of machine guns, but at least it wasn't going to be *The Cotton Club* all over again."

Somewhere along the line, Sylbert says, Beatty got the idea that he wanted to direct a triptych of films fused by a political framework. *Reds* would serve as "the man on the Left," and a biography of Howard Hughes (still pending) would constitute "the man on the Right." But what project would occupy the space between the two?

It begins simply with sketches and production paintings. A stark mood is established. This is the Ritz where Breathless Mahoney will sing.

Beatty decided on *Dick Tracy*, but its inherent commercial risks—how could the comic strip be turned into a movie, let alone without spending $75 million?—made him back off. At the same time, Elaine May was writing a role for him in *Ishtar*. "When *Ishtar* was finished and the damage was done, Warren realized that he had a new purpose for *Dick Tracy*," offers Sylbert. "Remember, between *Reds* and *Ishtar* he spent five or six years doing nothing, career-wise. He knew he *had* to direct *Dick Tracy*."

Planning for the film went on, as the designer recalls, "for months and months and months and months. Warren decided to go ahead with it about the time I was wrapping *Tequila Sunrise*. He came to the set one day and asked me if I could give him a couple of weeks to talk about *Dick Tracy* before I went off to Florida to see my mother. The idea was to fool with it a few weeks and then start working on it seriously when I returned. That was June 1, 1988. I finished the movie June 28, 1989."

Mattes were the production team's first consideration. "The more we talked about it—this was before either [director of photography Vittorio] Storaro or [costumer] Milena [Canonero] were involved—we knew mattes would be needed to represent the large, outside world of Tracy's city (in all, 38 were made), and the rest would be studio sets. Aside from what we built, we also went on two locations for interiors. One was a 150-foot-long tin-roof warehouse with a cement floor; the other, an old brick garage on Bay Street [in LA]."

Then, sets are built to the director, production designer and artist's specs.

The exterior of Tracy's apartment was constructed amid the "*Annie* section" of the Burbank Studios backlot. Universal, ideal for matte shots with its four-story-high stages, would house the police station, Tess Trueheart's pad, the orphanage, the Ritz nightclub and the diner. All would have a generic appearance. "That was a very smart first decision," says Sylbert. "Generic in the sense of an icon. Not a real building.

"The only thing *Dick Tracy* might have in common with *Batman* is that it's a purely American vision about gangsters trying to take over a city," says Richard Sylbert.

Photo: Peter Sorel

Club Scenes

Photo: Peter Sorel

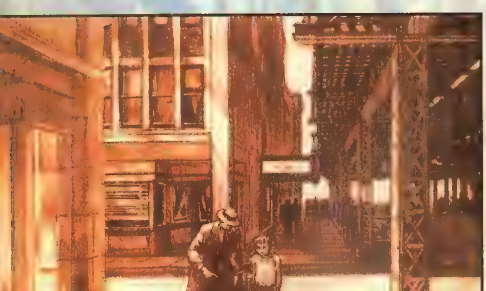
Photo: Peter Sorel

The players are assembled (in this case, a band of notorious mugs), the lighting is adjusted, and everyone awaits for the show to start as the camera rolls.

but an icon of a building—stripped of any real detail, generalized beyond belief. It's not Gotham City or Metropolis, it's 'The City.' The architecture is very *nonspecific*. When you see a sign that says, 'Ice Cream,' you don't know what kind it is. The local newspaper says, 'Daily Paper.' A dollar bill has just the dollar sign on it. They're all symbols, just as Gould intended them to be."

Tracy's world would be on the screen as it was in the comic strip, one of extraordinary simplicity. "If you look at a page of the life of Dick Tracy, there are *no* elaborate anythings. There are no tweeds—tweeds belong to the Untouchables. The cars are also generic—if you can identify a car as a Ford, you're not doing *Dick Tracy* right. A car is only a car, it's either a big car or it's a small car. So, we changed all the grilles and hood ornaments on our automobiles, including the police cars, to reflect the era, making sure to stay within the 1937-38 time period."

While the final script was being readied, Sylbert made some 11 black-and-white sketches picturing the hawk-nosed detective's milieu and what it would look like after dark. (Ninety percent of the movie takes place at night.) He envisioned it as cold and slightly expressionistic, with the Moon as an ever-present backdrop. "The aesthetic of Chester Gould is very different than other comic book artists," explains Sylbert. "He's not a great draftsman, like Alex Raymond [*Flash Gordon*] and Hal Foster [*Prince Valiant*]. Even Milton Caniff [*Terry and the Pirates*] was a wonderful draftsman. But as an aesthete, Chester Gould had them all beat. His weren't academy drawings, like Raymond's; his was a world of expressionistic, slightly deco-ized human beings where if you were evil, you *looked* evil. If you watch the strip, that aesthetic grew from 1931."



All Dick Tracy Photos: Copyright 1990 The Walt Disney Company

Painting with an extremely narrow palette, Sylbert colored Tracy's world in only six colors. Notice how the lawman's distinctive trenchcoat matches the background wall.

For reference, Sylbert and company turned to the classic *Dick Tracy* strips, both those that Sylbert had collected earlier and five years' worth of Sunday supplements, bound in leather, which Storaro had uncovered in a San Francisco bookstore. They proved invaluable resources, even though the colors changed "drastically" from newspaper to newspaper—a condition of which printer mixed what color ink in which city. "The original, early examples were thrilling. We color-Xeroxed the book and studied the strips and how they evolved over the years. You could actually watch a color, like red, bounce across the page from panel to panel—it was a design element. In one series, magenta was used instead of red."

In creating *Dick Tracy*'s color scheme, Sylbert, Storaro and Canonero proceeded in typical Beatty fashion: cautiously. "We started very slowly and very nervously," Sylbert remembers. "We talked about script, about casting, and every once in a while, we would nervously touch on the color issue. We all wondered: How can you have a flat person wearing a flat color? What's it going to look like? And what is our bible? Warren's instinct was to have us push as far as we could possibly push; he encouraged us to take enormous risks."

Street Scenes

But, as Sylbert learned, "saying it and doing it are two different things. What you find out is, all your training—except your technical training—has to go out the window. You have to give up *everything* you ever knew about specific movies, like the idea that you could make a set that's so convincing that real human beings could function and live in it—not good for *Dick Tracy*, all too specific. In essence, you're asking yourself to let go of everything you know, everything you went to school for."

The male characters were broken down into two groups: the gangsters and the good guys. Each would have *one* suit (the women would have more costume changes). Canonero brought in bolts of material in various shades of primary and secondary colors to use for screen tests. She would select five or six reds, blues, yellows, greens, oranges and purples, test them, and then, based on how the fabric and lighting interacted with each color, chose one shade of each hue for the "final" color. Based on those six colors, plus black and white, Sylbert planned his sets.

"I took a very narrow palette and made it narrower," the designer details. "I didn't need all six colors for every set. More often than not, a set had only one color. The walls in comic books aren't rendered in primary colors; the colors are thinned out. So, that gave us beiges, pale greens, whatever the variations were going to be. In this movie, if Dick Tracy is shown in his office wearing his raincoat, and he's holding a can of chili, the label is the same color red as his tie and the water cooler is the same yellow as his coat.

"We bounced color around the room. I would take Dick Tracy's tie color and cover all his furniture, including his drapes, in that color. Then, I would find a few touches of yellow to match his hat and coat, and I would be done with that particular room. Each room—down to the dishes in the kitchen—would be coordinated

(continued on page 32)

CHAMPIONS OF THE GALAXY WRESTLING GAME

ARE YOU READY FOR A HOT SUMMER?

Look no further! Bishop Hell is just one of over 50 awesome wrestlers that will set you on fire this summer with Champions of the Galaxy! You've already seen other GWF stars like Death Masque, in previous ads. You can't afford to miss out any longer! Champions of the Galaxy is a game-players paradise, with a whole federation of future stars at your fingertips! Each wrestler is represented by a sturdy playing card with an awesome drawing on the front!

Champions of the Galaxy is not complicated, like many role-playing games. It's easy-to-play and realistic too! You're in control of all the action! You decide whether Bishop Hell should throw his opponent into the turnbuckle or into the stands! Even better, you decide whether he should use his controversial finisher **Hellfire!** It's totally up to you! You rank the contenders and decide who will battle for the Galaxian Heavyweight Belt! A galaxy of superstars await you!

Each year Champions of the Galaxy fans demand new wrestlers! **War Games 2091** (the fifth edition) is hot off the presses! And **War Games 2091** is the boldest, most daring edition yet! This summer is your chance to find out why Champions of the Galaxy is destined to become the hottest action game of the '90s!

BISHOP HELL ☆ A Galaxian Wrestling Federation Profile ☆

Entered GWF: Invasion 2088
Manager: The Royal Overlord
Height: 6'5"
Weight: 258 lbs.

Finishing Move:
Bishop Hell's finishing move is the most controversial in the GWF. It is an illegal move called *HELLFIRE*. When the referee is distracted (possibly due to interference by the Royal Overlord) he shoots a flame-like substance out of his hand that temporarily blinds his opponent! Does Bishop Hell care that the move is illegal? Not a bit!

Typical Bishop Hell Quote:
"I have one goal in the GWF and that is to burn a path to the Galaxian Heavyweight Belt. If any wrestler questions my tactics in the ring, I'd like the fool to sign a match with me! Then I'll give him a close-up view of *HELLFIRE*!"

Current Ranking:
Bishop Hell is rated the #6 contender in the Official Top 20 Rankings compiled by the Club Galactica Super Report. The ranking is based on composite rankings mailed in by Super Report subscribers.

Check the box for the game editions you want to order:

- ☐ **Champions of the Galaxy.** Original game, featuring 24 galactic stars like Star Warrior and Wolf. Also includes instruction book, charts, and dice. **$13.00 total.**
- ☐ **Invasion 2088.** Second Edition. Includes Bishop Hell and Spike. Plus new booklet. **$10.00 total.**
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- ☐ **War Games 2091.** Hot off the presses! The biggest event of the summer! Features Mayhem and Justice! Plus special War Games booklet! **$10.00 total.**

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The Future of Wrestling is not going to pass me by! Send the order I've marked to:

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P.O. Box 945
Jamestown, NY 14702

Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery. For more information on Champions of the Galaxy, send to the above address for a free flier.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Canadian orders pay in U.S. currency or add 33%. New York orders add 7% sales tax.

Working out of the offices of *The Maze Agency*, Jennifer Mays, high class detective, and Gabe Webb, true crime writer, pursue the sweet mysteries of life.

Art: Adam Hughes/Rick Magyar

DETECTIVE STORIES

Mike Barr continues writing up his investigations, but the paperwork is murder.

Mike Barr is busy watching the detectives—or is that writing the detectives? At any rate, one of comics' more prolific writers is finding that most of his storytelling nowadays is centering on some of the best-known sleuths in comics. Barr is currently scripting the exploits of scientist/adventurer/detective *Doc Savage* for DC, as well as some special Bat-projects featuring the Darknight Detective.

Yet perhaps the project closest to his heart is *The Maze Agency*, a mystery series Barr created as a result of his love for the genre. The premise, he says, is a familiar one.

It's not high concept at all, in the sense that *Camelot 3000* is 'King Arthur in the future.' *The Maze Agency* is a premise that has been around for at least 50 years, which is that of a male/female detective team. It goes back to *The Thin Man*, and probably before that. There are dozens of them in popular culture, like *Remington Steele* and *McMillan and Wife*—popular culture is just lousy with male/female detective teams!" he laughs. "Some people have called *The Maze Agency* a rip-off of *Moonlighting*, which I think is pretty funny! If anything, stylistically, it owes much more to the Ellery Queen stories than it does anything on TV."

The Maze Agency, Barr explains, was developed to be the equivalent, in style and content, of the detective

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

novels he read while growing up. He developed the characters and the format in June 1986, and wrote the first script at that time.

That first script eventually turned into the first issue of the comic book itself: the first script that was actually drawn was a six-page story by Alan Davis, which appears in the *Maze Agency Special* from Innovation." Barr notes. "I wrote the six-page story to submit to publishers, as an example of what the book could be, rather than just submit character sheets and plotlines. Frankly, I wanted a physical thing, a published work, that I could trademark and copyright. So, it turned out to serve several purposes admirably!

"I'm not pretending I came up with anything new in terms of the format.

There aren't many detective comics anymore. There was a time when there were detective, Western, horror comics and superheroes. Nowadays, the field has generally atrophied to where there are primarily superheroes—and not just superheroes. Today, it's more like three or four superheroes that dominate. It's Batman, the X Men and the Punisher, and that seems to be pretty much what the market will bear now.'

Getting a title as different as *The Maze Agency* on the comic-book market wasn't that easy, he says. 'It was a bigger struggle than one might think. I thought that especially with the smaller publishers, selling something that's not superheroes would be fairly easy. Everybody seems to be down on superheroes these days, and I think that's unfair, because I really like superheroes. A good superhero book, like the Stan Lee/Jack Kirby *Fantastic Four*—you can t beat that.

"But some people seem to react negatively against all superheroes. The problem that some smaller publishers had with *The Maze Agency* was that it wasn't different *enough*. To many people, a book about detectives solving murders isn't really that different from a superhero book—they're both genre fiction!"

Gabe Webb and Jennifer Mays, Barr's *Maze Agency* co-stars, are opposites that attract, explains Barr, who notes that every aspect of each character's life is in conflict with the corresponding aspect of the other's.

'Jennifer is this very crisp, professional career woman, and Gabe is this freelance writer who has no idea where his next check is coming from. Jennifer is always very polished and professional, and Gabe sits at home in his bathrobe, writing whenever he feels like it. Jennifer has this beautiful brownstone apartment in Manhattan, and Gabe has this chaotic one-bedroom apartment in Queens.'

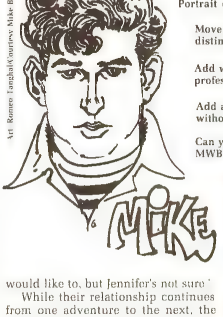
In addition to solving mysteries, fans are curious about the relationship between Gabe and Jennifer, but only Barr knows where it's heading.

"I have their relationship pretty well mapped out," he says. "One thing that has been very gratifying is that readers feel the relationship has been moving at just about the right speed. The first time they ever actually made love—at least as far as the readers know—in issue #6, I wondered if that was moving kind of fast, but many readers said no, that was just about right. I felt if we had delayed any longer, we would be coming into a situation that paralleled *Moonlighting*; they had this slap and tickle relationship that never really blossomed into anything, then that became the norm, and by the time they finally made love, all the tension and mystery was gone.

'I wanted to avoid that with *The Maze Agency* by letting the readers know that the relationship was always going to be progressing. Some readers have asked, 'Are they gong to get married?' Well, someday, maybe. Not right now. The big issue in the relationship now is, 'Is Gabe going to move in with Jennifer?' Gabe keeps hinting about it very broadly, and he would like to, but Jennifer's not sure.'

Art: Jerry Bingham

Lt. Bliss, Jennifer and Gabe's police pal, becomes a friend in need when the homicide cop finds herself accused of murder in *Maze Agency* #15.



Art: Romero Tanghal/Courtesy Mike Barr

Portrait of a writer.

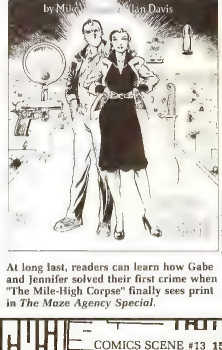
Move back hairline—just enough to look distinguished.

Add wire-rimmed glasses—you know, the professorial touch.

Add a few pounds—prosperous-looking, without being fat.

Can you make me look more like Gabe?—MWB

While their relationship continues from one adventure to the next, the stories in *The Maze Agency* are self-contained in one issue, a practice which Barr plans to continue. "A number of letters say readers like having a book that they can pick up one issue of and know that it's a complete story. They don't have to worry about whether they've missed the issue beforehand, or might miss the next issue. This doesn't rule out continued stories in the future. There have also been a few distribution and publishing problems," he says, noting that prior to its publication with Innovation with *Maze Agency* #8, the first seven issues were done for Comico. "Our Christmas issue came out in late January. This is not to be



Art: Alan Davis

At long last, readers can learn how Gabe and Jennifer solved their first crime when "The Mile-High Corpse" finally sees print in *The Maze Agency Special*.

desired, obviously, but it was nothing that anybody could help.

"Our sales have picked up a bit, and although we've never gotten much mail, it has always been very positive. We've also gotten constructive criticism from people who do care about the book. [Innovation publisher] Dave Campiti is very much behind *The Maze Agency*; Comico was also very much behind the book, but they just didn't think it was feasible to continue publishing it."

One of Barr's favorite comic book stories was *The Maze Agency* #9, which guest-starred one of his longtime heroes, Ellery Queen. "I was fantasizing about what it would be neat to do with *The Maze Agency*, and I thought it sure would be fun to do a team-up with Ellery Queen. Years ago, when I was writing *Brave and Bold*, I proposed that the team-up for #200 be Batman and Ellery Queen, and was more or less laughed out of the office [the issue eventually turned out to feature the Earth-1 and Earth-2 Batmen].

"I thought it would be neat to do the Maze Agency and Ellery Queen, but that would be impossible, of course. Then, I began to realize, 'Well, it's not *necessarily* impossible.' I contacted the agency that handles the Ellery Queen character and talked to Joshua Bilmes, and it turned out that he knew my work! I said, 'My name is Mike Barr,' and he said, 'Is that *the* Mike Barr?' So, we came to terms with the estates, and submitted some sketches that [then-regular artist] Adam Hughes had done, because they wanted approval over the visuals. I think they liked the issue very much—they asked Innovation for extra copies, anyway!"

DOC SAVAGE
NOW IT CAN BE TOLD! THE TRUTH BEHIND ONE OF THE GREATEST MYSTERIES OF THE WORLD! AND THE DESPERATE STRUGGLE OF THE MAN OF BRONZE AND HIS FABULOUS FIVE AGAINST A MADMAN WHO THREATENS TO CONTROL THE VERY WORLD!
WILLIAM HARPER "TYLER" - "JOHNNY"
MAJOR THOMAS J. ROBERTS - "LONG TOM"
BRIGADIER GEN. THEODORE HARLEY BROOKS - "HAM"
CLARK SAVAGE JR. - "DOC"
COL. JOHN RENWICK - "JOHNNY"
LT. COL. ALDEN BLODGETT - "MONK"
Art: Rod Whigham & Steve Montano
All Doc Savage Art & Characters Copyright 1990 Conde Nast Publications, Inc.

Doc Savage and his men unravel the mystery of the *Hindenburg* in a tale which, Barr notes, couldn't have been told at the time.

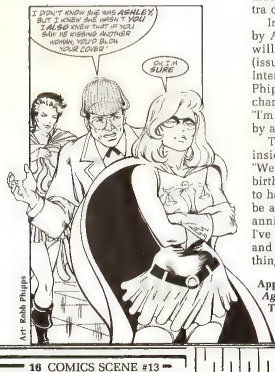
In the future, in addition to covers by Adam Hughes, forthcoming issues will feature covers by Paul Smith (issue #14) and Jerry Bingham (#15). Interior art is now provided by Robb Phipps. Barr says it's fun to see his characters drawn by different artists. "I'm going to see the characters drawn by as many people as I can!"

There will be quite a bit coming up inside the covers, as well, he notes. "We're going to be celebrating Gabe's birthday, and the June issue is going to have a short back up story that will be a Spirit pastiche, to mark the 50th anniversary of Will Eisner's Spirit. I've always very much liked the seven and eight-page story format; the neat thing about owning a project like *The Maze Agency* flat-out is I can do pretty much anything I want to!

"Plans are a little vague for the last half of the year, but sometime in the summer, Gabe and Jennifer will be going camping in the mountains, which ought to be fun—Jennifer likes to camp and Gabe doesn't. Gabe will be out there wandering around saying, 'Where's the television? Where's the flush toilet?' "

And how close is Gabe to the real-life Mike Barr?

"Gabe is pretty close!" he admits, laughing.


I DON'T KNOW SHE WAS ASHLEY, BUT I KNEW SHE WASN'T YOU! I ALSO KNEW THAT IF YOU SAW US KISSING ANOTHER WOMAN, YOU'D BURN YOUR COVER!
"I'LL BE SURE"
Art: Robb Phipps

Appearances to the contrary, *Maze Agency is* set in the modern, real world. That's Gabe as Holmes and Jennifer as her childhood comic-book heroine, Justice Girl.

Barr also scripts the adventures of a different sort of detective, pulp hero *Doc Savage*, for DC Comics, adventures that are now set back in the 1930s at Barr's urging.

"When I started on *Doc Savage* with #7, my editor, Mike Carlin, asked if I had any brilliant ideas to boost sales. I said, 'This isn't brilliant, and I know it has been suggested, but DC is now publishing The Shadow—why don't we bring The Shadow and

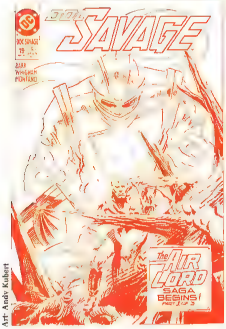
Doc Savage together?' It had indeed been suggested before by other people at DC, but for some reason, they couldn't bring it together, possibly because of the *severe* stylistic differences between the early issues of *Doc Savage* and the 1980s *Shadow* that was a spin-off of the Howard Chaykin series. I can see why they wouldn't want to bring these two different versions of the characters together, but when I realized that *The Shadow Strikes!* was going to be set in the '30s, and I had already set the *Doc Savage Annual* in the '30s, I said, 'Why don't we do a crossover?' It turned out to be OK with everybody, so Gerry Jones and I got together and worked out the plot.

"I said to [*Doc Savage* editors] Mike Carlin and Jonathan Peterson, 'This seems to be working out, so why don't we use the crossover as a springboard to *leave* the series back in 1930s?' So, picking up with #19, we're just leaving it there. Rod Whigham, our penciller, is a big '30s fan and has a lot of research on it."

Art: Bill Willingham

All Maze Agency Characters & Art Copyright 1990 Mike W. Barr.

Gabe and Jennifer's romance remains a mystery to everyone but Mike Barr. "I have their relationship pretty well mapped out," he confesses.



Art: Andy Kuhert

Barr will be keeping Savage's adventures in the pulp era—if only for a few more issues.

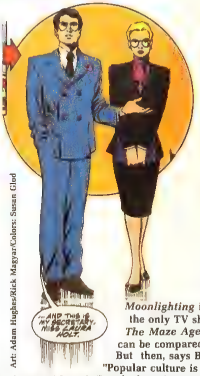
Explains Barr, "The first part of 'The Air Lord,' the story that's out now, ended with Doc Savage aboard the *Hindenburg* as it was exploding. That concept, to me, is just pure Doc Savage! As Gerry Jones commented, we can do things that the books' creators couldn't do. If [Doc Savage creator/writer] Lester Dent were to have done a story on the *Hindenburg*, it would have been considered in the *worst* possible bad taste. But, 53 years after the tragedy, we can do that!"

Although Doc Savage—like The Shadow—is licensed to DC by Conde Nast, Barr says that so far, they have had no objections to any of his '30s stories. "We're doing very little there to divert from the 1930s conception of the character, and I've been told that Conde Nast is very pleased with the stories."

Nevertheless, DC is cancelling *Doc Savage* with issue #24. The apparent reason is the spectre that haunts most licensed comics. To justify their higher costs (due to the often-hefty license fees), they must have higher sales than comparative non-licensed titles.

Barr is also writing a pair of adventures of comics' greatest detective, both of which he hopes will be out later this year; each is a sequel to one of his earlier Batman projects.

"The working title of the *Son of the Demon* sequel is *Bride of the Demon*, which will be drawn by Tom Grindsberg. I've just delivered the plot



Art: Adam Hughes/Rick Magyar/Colors: Susan Glod

***Moonlighting* isn't the only TV show *The Maze Agency* can be compared to. But then, says Barr, "Popular culture is just lousy with male/female detective teams!"**

Art: Adam Hughes/Rick Magyar

The writer's creations meet a writer/creation he has long admired in "a story that was a reasonable tribute to the spirit of Ellery Queen."

to DC, and Tom and I are both anxiously waiting to begin work on that."

Although *Son of the Demon* ends with the birth of what is apparently the son of the Batman, a closed-mouthed Barr cautions readers not to presume too much about the sequel. "In *Son*, Batman and Ra's al Ghul were pretty much on the same side throughout—they had joined forces to defeat a third world terrorist. Now, *Bride* returns them to their more or less natural roles as antagonists. Ra's al Ghul has a plot to restore the world's ecological balance, and at the same time, arrange for an heir to carry on his work should he not live much longer," he reveals.

"It takes place in Gotham City, in the Amazon rain forest, and in Antarctica—it bounces all over the world. With Batman, it's as close as you can come to doing a James Bond film; that's what Denny O'Neil had in mind when he created Ra's al Ghul. He's a very different sort of villain for Batman, both in mood and motif."

Barr's other Bat-project is a present-day follow-up to *Year Two* called *Full Circle*, done in a one-issue Prestige format, with art by Alan Davis. "We had worked together on *Detective Comics* in 1986, and in the first chapter of *Batman: Year Two*, we created a character called the Reaper, who was established as being a crimefighter in Gotham City before the Batman. In the sequel, it looks like the Reaper has returned to Gotham City, and he has a plan of vengeance against Batman which, if I do say so myself, is really pretty nasty! Although it's a sequel to *Batman: Year Two*, it's part of the modern Batman continuity, so it'll have the Tim Drake Robin."

For the longtime writer, some stories are easy to write, while others are like pulling teeth.

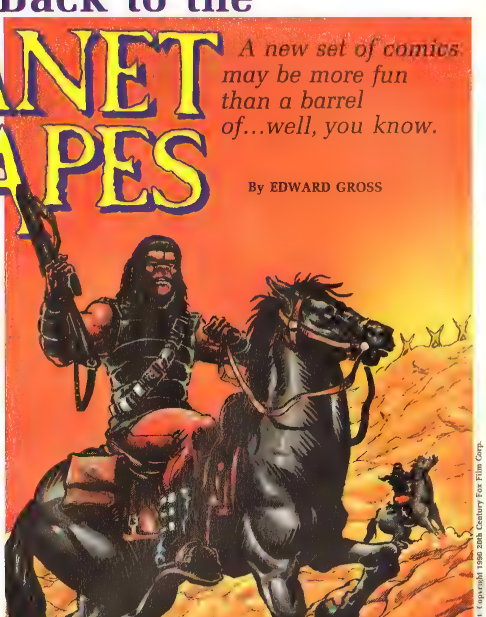
"You would think that the stories that are easy to write would be the best ones, but that's not by any means the case. Sometimes, the stories that are hardest to write are the ones that give me the most satisfaction, because it *is* a struggle. The plot of *The Maze Agency* #9, which featured Ellery Queen, gave me no end of trouble. I must have reworked that four or five times. Finally, I felt like I had a story that was a reasonable tribute to the spirit of Ellery Queen, and that I had brought the *Maze Agency* characters into the Ellery Queen universe, rather than the other way around."

(continued on page 52)

Welcome Back to the PLANET OF THE APES

A new set of comics may be more fun than a barrel of...well, you know.

By EDWARD GROSS



Planet of the Apes Characters & Art ©copyright 1990 20th Century Fox Film Corp.

"Go Ape!" was the proclamation of 20th Century Fox when they released all five *Planet of the Apes* films on a single bill in the mid-1970s. It could also easily be the cry of Adventure Comics in 1990.

Adventure, a subsidiary of Malibu Graphics, has no less than *four* separate *Planet of the Apes* projects on line, all under the creative guidance of writer Charles Marshall.

"It's really kind of a dream project for me, and I'm doing my best with it," says Marshall. "I grew up with all the movies and the TV series and was a pretty big fan. Many people who are comics fans now—probably the main direct sales market—are at an age where they were into *Planet of the Apes* too, which is why it may be a real hot book. It may be coming at the right time when the readers are looking back nostalgically."

Marshall began his tenure amongst the monkeys when Adventure Comics Creative Director Tom Mason gave him a shot at pitching concepts for the title.

"Tom had a couple of proposals on his desk," Marshall explains, "but nothing really excited him, so he said, 'Send me a proposal and we'll see.' Two days later, he had a proposal in his hands, and that afternoon, he called me and gave me the job."

So impressed with his ideas was Mason that Marshall was put in charge of the monthly title as well as a four-issue mini-series, *Ape City*. These in turn have led to a forthcoming one-shot entitled *A Day on the Planet of the Apes* and a second mini-series called *Ape Nation*, which is actually a crossover between *Apes* and, of all things, *Alien Nation*.

Planet of the Apes takes place 100 years after the final film in the series, *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*, and continues themes presented there.

"In the monthly series, we're trying to stay pretty true to the films," Marshall details, "and we're trying to expand on many of the elements from them. *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* seemed to be the one with the most elements left hanging, so I chose to follow those because the characters were probably the most interesting. But because of the nature of the license for this property, we couldn't use the actual characters [from the movies], so we bumped it up a few years and used their offspring. For instance, with Caesar, we brought in his grandson. Most of the characters have some tie back to the movies in one way or another. We're really trying to keep the elements that made the films so unique while updating *Apes* for today's comics audience.

"I guess what we were trying to do is get a core group of characters we could build the stories around," he adds. "Originally, it was set up as a mini-series, where we were trying to tell one good story. Now, it has changed because they've spread it out to an ongoing series, so what I even-

The events of the new Apes monthly take place 100 years after *Battle for the Planet of the Apes*.

tually want to do is come back with some single issue stories. I'm not a big fan of cliffhanger endings, although we do seem to do that a great deal in the first four issues."

Using the films as a launching pad, the writer says that he has a very clear-cut direction in which to travel.

"The first two films dealt with a planet of the apes in the far future," Marshall states. "I'm trying to set into motion some of the things in the past that will get to the future. For example, at the first movie's end, Dr. Zaius reads, 'Beware the Beast Man...' Well, that document is going to be written by one of my characters in a future issue after an encounter with some humans. I'm trying to set up things now that will get the world to where it is in the first two movies. Both series will do that in a roundabout way. We know what's going to happen when Charlton Heston lands on the planet, so what I'm doing is laying down a foundation for that. In some sense, that makes it easier for me, because I know what's out there and I know what's behind me. I'm just trying to fill up the middle."

Planet of the Apes #1-4 take place in Ape City, where Caesar's grandson, Alexander, is struggling with the burden of leadership. Simultaneously, the city itself is torn apart from within by the gorilla General Ollo, who serves as the leader of the Aldoites. That group is based on the "teachings" of General Aldo (from *Battle*) who believed that gorillas were the master race and that it was certainly all right for ape to kill ape...and anything else that moved.

"In the last movie, the gorillas were becoming more and more menacing," Marshall notes, "so it seemed like a natural extension that someone would pick up that mantle and say, 'This ape had the right idea. He was on the ball; he knew what was going on. This is what we *should* do.' The gorillas are a pretty sorry lot anyway, because there's not much for them to do. They're militaristic but there's nobody to fight, so they would be willing to follow that way of thinking very easily. Ollo is the one gorilla with real intelligence, and the rest are basically followers. In the movies, the gorillas seemed to be held on a very tight leash. In our series, they finally break that leash and do what they want."

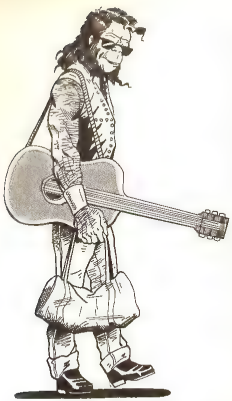
Alexander, with all his doubts and insecurities, is a character who fascinates Marshall. "I think anyone who has a famous or great person in their family has those kinds of doubts," he muses. "You're given more opportunity, but you're also given more responsibility. You're seen as basically the same person. In this case, the apes are looking at Alexander in the same way they looked at Caesar, and that may be too much weight for him. He's not sure he's strong enough to be the ape that Caesar was. I would like to think that he is. If I was in his paws, I would feel the same way. He has quite a legacy to live up to, because he fell into the leadership of Ape City, and didn't really earn it, which brings about most of the doubts. But by the end of the first four issues, he feels as though he *has* earned it."

Art: Dale Keown

Other characters include: Jacob, an orangutan who fears the very concept of intelligent human beings—much as Dr. Zaius did in the films—and the potential threat they pose to the simian race; Grunt, the giant mute offspring of General Ollo who ultimately turns out to be a source of his father's undoing; and Simon, a human to whom knowledge is all-important. Marshall promises that future issues will take all of these characters, and many yet to be introduced, in various directions.

"There will be many shake-ups with the characters," he says. "There will be betrayal and some turns I don't think the readers will be expecting. I would also like to give the reader much more insight to the planet of the apes, its surroundings and its settings. I want to jump ahead several years at one point, not giving a straight day-by-day account, but more a year-by-year account of what's happening, so you see more

WHY DO YOU HAVE YOUR OLD MASTER'S SKIN?
WHY, MOST YOU, ME!
KRAAA-AA-AA-A



"It's the next logical step when apes take over," notes writer Charles Marshall of *Ape City*, where simians take up all of man's previous pursuits, even Elvis impersonating.

You still have the buildings, the clothing stores and the restaurants. These apes who have been servants to the humans, who have seen how they acted, are all suddenly in the same shoes. I can't imagine that they would just throw everything away. They know that it's not going to last forever unless they can figure out the technology, but they can't. They don't have the numbers or enough apes intelligent enough to figure it out, plus they don't have the resources. They don't have petroleum coming in, so they can only drive cars or motorcycles until the gas runs out. There's definitely an energy crisis on the planet of the apes!

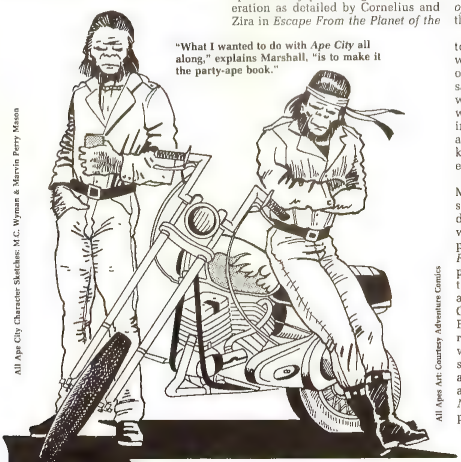
'I really like the characters. To me, that's the fun book to write. I enjoy writing *Planet of the Apes*, but *Ape City* is a labor of love. With *Ape City*, I'm playing for myself, and I hope it's enjoyable for the readers as well."

Ape City brings together a variety of simians: Dr. Benday, an older orangutan considered to be the smartest ape on Earth, who is doing what he can to solve the energy crisis; Cong, an 18-foot "adopted son" of Benday, and the result of a genetic experiment; Mongo, a chimpanzee described as part-daredevil, part-actor, part-pathological liar, part-brawler, part-lover and part-Elvis impersonator; Rox, a female gorilla warrior; and the Baboonjas, a race of dim-witted baboon ninja warriors. Added to the mix are the Vindicators, a group of killers sent from the past with state-of-the-art weaponry to help mankind balance itself out against the apes, thereby preventing Earth's obliteration as detailed by Cornelius and Zira in *Escape From the Planet of the Apes*, and seen at the conclusion of *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*.

Explaining the Vindicators, Marshall notes, "The humans in the past basically know their future, that apes are going to take over the planet. I can't imagine that they would have that information and *not* try doing something about it. It's interesting that the first thing they did was to enslave the apes [in *Conquest*], which set up circumstances for the future to take place. That's a self-fulfilling prophecy. On another level, I think they would try to do something more drastic, and from that, I came up with the idea of sending a suicide squad into the future to change the human/ape balance. You basically get killers with no redeeming qualities whatsoever, and put them in a situation where they're like a computer virus, working their way in and doing as much damage as they can. So, as I see it, they're the big threat to the planet of the apes.

'What I wanted to do with *Ape City* all along," he elaborates, "is to make it the party-ape book. Just a lot of fun with nobody really caring about the future, and living for right now. We also establish that there are many threats here, too. *Everybody* wants to be on top. It's kind of a wild ride all the way through."

"What I wanted to do with *Ape City* all along," explains Marshall, "is to make it the party-ape book."



All Ape City Character Sketches: M.C. Wyman & Marvin Perry Mason

All Apes Art Courtesy Adventure Comics

Scheduled to be a 40-page one-shot for publication late this summer, *A Day on the Planet of the Apes* is an anthology that spans the globe to explore monkey life.

"This title was inspired by the photography book they did recently where they sent photographers all over the world to take pictures on the same day, so you got a feeling for what was going on everywhere. I wanted to tell stories that took place in one day all over the planet of the apes, so you got a feeling for what kind of place this was and how different it was."

The same could be said for Marshall's career. Besides being a successful copywriter, he pens a syndicated newspaper column, has worked for various comic book companies and is the author of Caliber's *Fugitive*, which deals with a psychopathic killer being chased by a detective through old TV shows. In addition, he is developing with DC Comics a sort of "which-way" Batman/Two-Face story in which the reader must flip a coin to determine which page he should go to next in the story. And Marshall has just gotten approval from Adventure Comics for a *Planet of the Apes* and *Alien Nation* crossover mini-series to be published late this year.

(continued on page 68)

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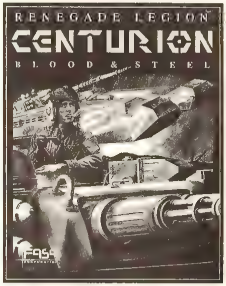

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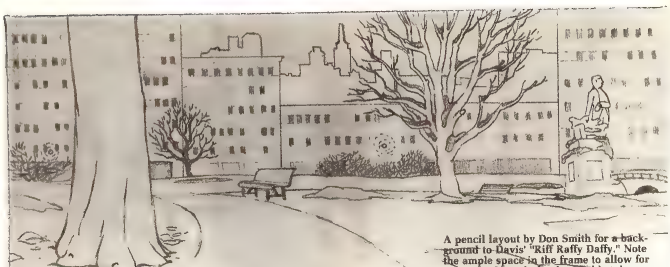
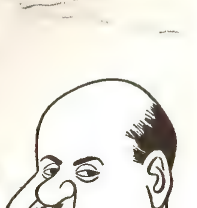


Art, Don Smith/Courtesy Leith Adams, Warner Bros. Archives/USC Cinema TV

A pencil layout by Don Smith for a background to Davis' "Riff Raffy Daffy." Note the ample space in the frame to allow for Davis' trademark depth-of-field style.

Suspended Animation



Art Davis sang those "Looney Tunes" too, but only today are his fans beginning to hum along.

By MICHAEL MALLORY

Any fan of Warner Bros. animation can name the directors responsible for the classic period, the post-war to color television years. Friz Freleng, Chuck Jones and Robert McKimson have each been justly acclaimed for their work during Warners' peak years. And then, there was Arthur Davis.

Who is Arthur Davis?

Truly the lost man of Warner Bros. animation, Davis directed 21 cartoons between 1946 and 1949, replacing the resident "wildman," Robert Clampett. His pictures are consistently good—fast, brash, sharply timed and funny—and not a few are gems. Davis possessed a uniquely cinematic approach to animation, utilizing offbeat camera "angles" and movement and giving his cartoons unusual depth by blocking his characters to run or fall directly into the lens, rather than just a side-to-side movement. J.C. "Bill" Melendez, who animated for Davis and Clampett, says, "Artie was just as good as Chuck Jones any day," and those 21 cartoons show that Arthur Davis could have developed into one of the best cartoon makers the studio ever produced.

So, why has he been overshadowed by the "Big Three"?

"I've had a lot of experience, but I'm a retiring person, hesitant to blow my own horn," says Art Davis, now living in active retirement in Northern California. However, at age 84, he is pleased, if a little surprised, at the prospect of rediscovery.

Born June 14, 1905 in Yonkers, New York, Arthur Davis first entered a cartoon studio at age 16, working as a gofer at the Jefferson/Fox Studios where his older brother, Mannie, was employed as an animator. He would soon move on to the Fleischer Studios, becoming the first inbetweener in the industry. In the mid-20s, he worked on the Fleischers' "Follow The Bouncing Ball" cartoons—as the ball! "Those were shot live action," Davis recalls. "One of the Fleischer brothers could play the ukelele and I used to bounce the ball and keep time. The ball was a round thumbtack on a black stick."

As he moved up in the business at Fleischer, another young producer tried to lure Davis west to Los Angeles, but each money offer was countered by Dave Fleischer. Consequently, Davis never did work for that cartoon maker, who was named Walt Disney, but while in New York, he began a long and important friendship with another young animator, Isadore "Friz" Freleng (CS #8).

Eventually, Davis did leave Fleischer, moving to the Charles Mintz studio, and did come West in 1930 when Mintz moved to Hollywood. There, he wrote stories, did layouts, animated and directed—usually all at the same time.

Caricature Courtesy Ned Comstock/USC Archives of Performing Arts

"I did those cartoons practically on my own," Davis says, "and so did Sid Marcus, though we exchanged animation credits on each other's pictures. There was no overall head of the studio, everyone was working on their own, hit or miss. I put out four cartoons a year in that fashion. It was kind of gratifying to me." Not everyone was happy with that system, however, and in 1941, Columbia-Screen Gems, who released the Mintz pictures, attempted to bring about some order by hiring Frank Tashlin, fresh from Disney, to oversee.

"When they got Tash in there, Columbia thought they had the thing solved," Davis says. "Tashlin had a good young animator, Bob Wickersham, who wanted to direct. They offered him $80 a week. I was getting $300. So, they fired me."

The next three months were the only period of unemployment in his life, he says, but soon he was back at the drawing table, this time for Warners. Ironically, his first animation credit for the studio was 1943's "Scrap Happy Daffy," directed by none other than Frank Tashlin, who lasted only one year at Screen Gems. Such were the caprices of the animation business.

By the middle of World War II, the distinctive Warner Bros. cartoon style had been established and the boys at "Termite Terrace" (as the Leon Schlesinger Studio was self-dubbed) were knocking 'em out of the park more often than not. But turmoil was on the horizon.

In 1944, Schlesinger sold out to Warner Bros. and the studio installed as its new animation head one Eddie Selzer. "You've heard the famous story about Selzer, haven't you?" Art Davis asks. "One day, he's walking through the studio and he hears all this laughter coming out of a room. It's a story meeting, but Selzer says, 'What the hell does all this laughter have to do with cartoons? Get to work!' "

Staff changes were imminent. In 1946, director Frank Tashlin left and was replaced by animator Robert McKimson. A few months later, another directorial spot opened up with the sudden departure of Bob Clampett. The accepted story is that Clampett resigned in order to pursue his own projects, but Art Davis has a different recollection: "I always hate to say this, but they had to get rid of him. He was an excellent director, I admired his work, but he was difficult to work with."

Bill Melendez (now director of the *Peanuts* specials) found no difficulty, but agrees that Clampett created friction at the studio. "Clampett was a wildman!" he states. "Clampett was one of the most fun guys to work with but he was undisciplined. He wouldn't do what Eddie Selzer wanted. Selzer treated us like garment workers, and he hated Clampett's guts because he was undisciplined. When Leon sold out to Warner Bros., Bob's days were numbered."

Whether one considered him a genius or a troublemaker, Clampett's departure left strong feelings behind. But with a yearly cartoon output to maintain, *someone* had to step in and take over, get along with the difficult new management as well as the three other units, plus make the quota with a unit whose members were fiercely loyal to their former leader. The man who got the nod in that trying situation was Arthur Davis.

"They gave me the directorial spot because I had been directing at Screen Gems, and even though that had a sour reputation, I made some credible cartoons. I think I was a better director than animator, but my sojourn at Warners was a bit hectic," Davis says.

"They had other qualified men there and I was one of the last ones in, so it was sort of an honor to be named director. But the fact that I was a last-minute replacement—I felt ill at ease and a little put out at times."

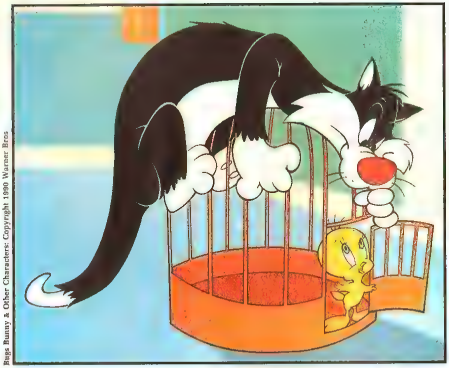
It didn't show in the work. His first cartoon and only 1946 release, "Mouse Menace," set the Davis style: fast, frenetic, the emphasis on action rather than personality, and already utilizing horizontal depth and filmic low-angle and point-of-view camera "set-ups," even in casual scenes. It was a style apparently as *instinctive* as *distinctive*. "Is that really what you see in those?" Davis asks today with a laugh. "The only real premeditation was to try and make it unique, for one thing, and entertaining, for another. At Warners, we weren't as concerned with quality; our main thrust was to make the darned things funny."

His next release was a project begun by Bob Clampett, 1947's "The Goofy Gophers," which introduced the two hopelessly polite rodents, Mac and Tosh. How much was Davis and how much Clampett? "The soundtrack for that was already recorded," he says, "and it was up to me to use it or not use it. The voices were cute, so I thought, 'Why redo it?' "

It is also on record that Davis supervised a color remake of Clampett's bizarre 1938 classic "Porky in Wackyland," but the reports, it turns out, are exaggerated. "I read that somewhere, but I have *no idea* what that picture was about. I've never seen it!"

Robert McKimson directed the Tasmanian Devil shorts. When it came time to pare down the directorial units, Warners decided to fold Davis' tent and retain McKimson.

For the next two years, Davis turned out consistently good work, scoring several bullseyes. One of the director's favorites, "Mexican Joyride" (1947), is a fast and funny farce that pits Davis' favorite "actor," Daffy Duck against a behemoth *el toro*, anticipating Chuck Jones' later "Bully For Bugs." Davis wrote the story for another favorite, "A Hick, a Slick and a Chick" (1948) but received no credit for it ("The credits were hit and miss on those cartoons," he says) and contributed the title for one of his best, 1948's "Nothing But the Tooth." This cartoon, set in the Gold Rush days, is one long duel between Porky and a pint-sized Indian intent on scalping him, and the title is notable for the fact that it has almost *nothing* to do with the cartoon. Another Davis classic, "Dough Ray Me-Ow" (1948) features the ultimate animated George and Lenny act, diminutive Louie the Bird and enormous Heathcliff the Cat, who is



Bugs Bunny & Other Characters: Copyright 1999 Warner Bros.

"You look at Sylvester or Tweety, those characters are alive," says Davis, citing the lack of spirit in today's Toons.

so stupid he forgets to breathe.

Except for a tagline cameo in "Goofy Gophers," Arthur Davis worked with the studio's biggest star only once, in 1949's "Bowery Bugs." "Bugs was a favorite of Chuck and Friz, particularly Friz," Davis says, "so when a Bugs Bunny was being done, it would be given to Freleng or Jones." Davis personally feels that The Wabbit did his best work with Freleng at the helm.

All of the Davis cartoons hold up very well today, but something in them seems to have escaped the management at the time. Many of Davis' pictures weren't even presented in the usual Technicolor, the studio opting instead for the inferior Cinecolor process. Comments Davis, "The Technicolor process was very expensive and they didn't know how my pictures were going to do. So, they said, 'Let's put them in color—cheap color!' I remember they faked the yellow somehow."

Photo: Michael Mallory

As the '40s faded, economics reared its ugly head, directly affected, Davis feels, by the influence of the new medium television, and four cartoon units operating simultaneously became just too much for the studio to handle. One unit had to go, but which one? Robert McKimson beat Art Davis into the director's chair by a few months, but Davis had more overall experience directing. And the Davis cartoons were uniformly good (even in cheap color) and frequently showed more flair and filmic sense than McKimson's product. So, the question remains: Why was Arthur Davis dropped?

The man himself is philosophical. "I was the last one in; McKimson was a good draftsman and he got some lucky breaks from Warren Foster, a good story man. Selzer wasn't convinced mine were that much better, so they let me go."

But another clue comes from Friz Freleng: "Many people were vying for the position of director and they settled things by putting in McKimson, to stop all the bickering. McKimson accepted ideas and criticism. Bob sat back and let you correct him without any trouble; you could control the material."

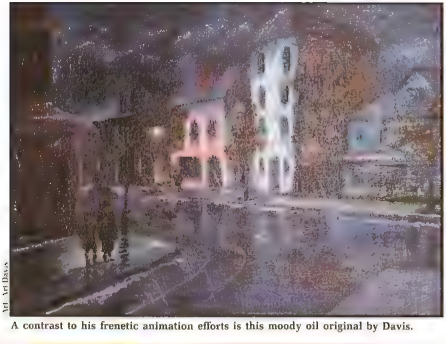
And Bill Melendez offers, "Artie was a good, competent director, but he might have been a much better director had he not been subjected to infighting and politics."

Perhaps it wasn't only four cartoon units the studio was no longer willing to handle. Perhaps having three strong, individualistic directors once again was also too much.

"At Warners, we weren't as concerned with quality; our main thrust was to make the darned things funny," declares Art Davis.

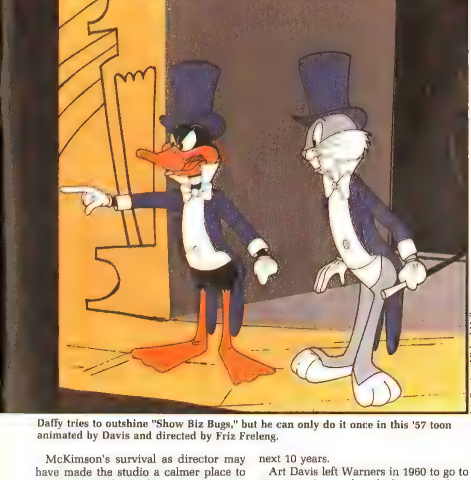
TM & Art Davis

Davis' self-caricature (on floor) commemorating a perfect poker hand. Studio politics at Warners would deal him a different hand entirely.



Art: Art Davis

A contrast to his frenetic animation efforts is this moody oil original by Davis.



Art: Courtesy Michael Mallory

Daffy tries to outshine "Show Biz Bugs," but he can only do it once in this '57 toon animated by Davis and directed by Friz Freleng.

McKimson's survival as director may have made the studio a calmer place to work, but it didn't end Davis' association with Warner Bros. "When I was let out, Friz asked me if I would come and animate with him," Davis says. "I didn't know what I was going to do, so I joined Friz. Animating for him didn't hurt me none!" It didn't hurt Freleng, either, since he went on to win three Oscars in the next 10 years.

Art Davis left Warners in 1960 to go to Hanna-Barbera, where he has worked, on and off, up to the present. He retired, on paper at least, in 1972, but hardly slowed down. When not animating for Hanna-Barbera, he served as a consultant and, most recently, a timing director, working out of his home. In the early 1960s, he was back with Friz Freleng at DePatie/Freleng, even flexing his directing muscles once again, and he has managed to keep busy outside of the industry with sidelines such as writing, oil painting and inventing. Davis holds a patent for a miniature planetarium designed for children.

While probably not *completely* retired—asked if he's working on anything, Davis answers, "No. You got a story for me?"—he admits a preference for taking it easy, traveling and spending time with his grandchildren and *great*-grandchildren. "I don't want to work too much," he says. "Ralph Bakshi called me a couple of weeks ago to work for him, but I didn't want to come to Hollywood again."

The master animator and director finds most animation today lacking in spirit. "Their hearts aren't in it, they're just doing it," he says. "Pictures today have no background, no substance. The old Warner Bros. pictures—those characters had a life to them, they weren't just characters moving around. You look at Sylvester or Yosemite Sam or Tweety or Chuck's skunk [Pepe LePew], those characters are *alive*. The people who made those took it out of the category of just a drawing."

One notable exception for Davis, though, was *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. "That was just marvelous!" he says. "Richard Williams always did quality work, but what he did on *Roger Rabbit* was marvelous."

Art Davis looks back on his days as a Warners director with mixed feelings. He speaks proudly of some of his cartoons, dismissively of others, but overall feels that he missed getting a chance.

"I really had many negative things to overcome when I got to Warners," he says. "I wasn't one of the gang. The other directors had the advantage of working together for quite awhile and playing off each other. I never had that advantage."

But if his is a career that just missed its potential, it was still a long and honorable one. Four years ago, Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists bestowed upon Art Davis its Golden Award honoring 50 years of service to the medium. And the bottom line is that no amount of forced economics or studio politics can diminish those 21 prime Arthur Davis cartoons.

In their exhaustive volume *Warner Bros. Cartoons*, Will Friedwald and Jerry Beck write: "Davis and Daffy [Duck, of course] work so well together that almost all of their collaborations are great." And animation historian/renaissance man Mike Cazella considers Art Davis a "brilliant" director and rates his "Bowery Bugs" as one of The Wabbit's finest hours.

The Raters of the Lost Art is a small but devoted following, hoping to increase its ranks. Meanwhile, the man hesitant to blow his own horn says, with characteristic reserve, "I'm glad someone recognized *something* that I did."

Who's the real sleuth here? Depending on which *Baker Street* you're on, the answer is elementary.

Another Game's Afoot!

By T.L. JOHNS

Punks and dirigibles? What other mysteries await this world's greatest detective on "Baker Street"?

Picture yourself as an American student studying medicine in a London untouched by the ravages of Nazi bombings. You've just landed a small room to live in, and it's even free of rent. But your roommates and their friends have a tendency to wear strange clothing and sport safety pins and jewelry in what seem to be very painful places. One of your roommates, though she seems strong-willed and sure of herself, has a mysterious past and a penchant for mysteries. Your other roommate outwardly loathes you, but you've also caught her doing nice things for you.

Are you dreaming? Are you confused? Or have you simply entered what Caliber Press and creators Gary Reed and Guy Davis like to call the "*Baker Street* zone"?

Davis and Reed brought shy medical student Susan Prendergast, the highly deductive and logical Sharon Ford (a.k.a. Harlequin) and the streetwise Sam to readers' attention last year. Detroit native and University of Michigan alumnus Reed, 33, who owns Caliber Press and several retail comic stores in Michigan, notes that this is the first comic project on which he has worked. And although Davis has more experience than Reed, having drawn 15 issues of *The Realm*, he concedes that he's still a novice, too.

Top: Sam, Sharon Ford & Susan Pendergast.

Below: (center row) A *very* early look at the three roommates of 112B Baker Street.

All B&W Baker Street Art: Guy Davis

All Baker Street Art Copyright 1986 Guy Davis & Gary Reed

Inspector Pinner, Sharon's sole remaining friend on the police force.

Chief Inspector Lester Strand, the thorn in Sharon's side.

Both describe the birth of *Baker Street* as a joint effort brought about by Reed, who was searching for titles to publish under the Caliber banner.

"We came up with the idea [for *Baker Street*] while standing in the back of the plant in a very cold storage room," relates Reed. "Guy wanted to get off of *The Realm*. So, we came up with the idea to do *I Spy* first."

"Originally, Gary and I were supposed to do a spy-spoof comic, *I Spy*," Davis explains. "But Gary is a really big Sherlock Holmes fan and he wanted that instead."

"The original [*Baker Street*] idea was to take the Sherlock Holmes stories and put them into a punk universe. The alternate universe idea was in right from the beginning," notes Reed. "That way, we could have the establishment of the punk scene as it was in the 1970s.

"Then," says Reed, "we decided that since we were dong it in the punk motif, if people had never read Sherlock Holmes in the first place, having the adaptations with punks really wouldn't mean much to them. And the people who *did* read Sherlock Holmes wouldn't want him bastardized. So, we decided to just keep some of the flavor.

"The way we established that Victorian flavor was that there was no World War II. So, that kept up the Victorian style architecture, because World War II made so many drastic changes in the world. It got rid of monarchies and everything. This keeps the turn-of-the-century style, the same attitudes then developing."

Otherwise, most of the differences are being downplayed and reserved to brief mentions in only a few panels, Reed explains. One example readers may have noticed is that although *Baker Street* is taking place now, the United States is just putting up its first manned moon shot. Dirigibles are still seen floating in the air above.

"We don't want it to seem like it's a really important issue in the book," remarks Davis. "It's just background."

True fans of Arthur Conan Doyle's world-famous detective may be dismayed to find out that, Holmes has no home in this alternate reality.

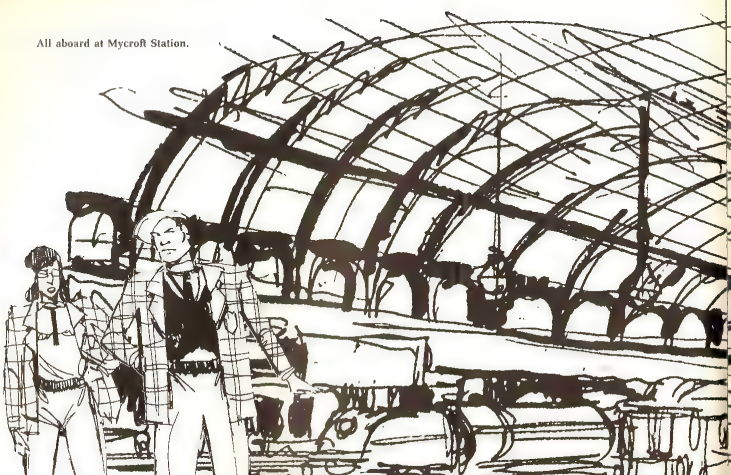
"I never even thought of anything like [having the character of Sherlock Holmes known in this universe], because Sharon Ford is *the* Sherlock Holmes of this era," admits Davis. "It *is* true that Sharon and Susan can be very loosely translated into the characters of Holmes and Watson."

"The feel of the comic is not even a pastiche," continues Reed. "It's more of an homage and a picking up of the flavor itself rather than a derivative of it, although most of the names that we use are derived from the Sherlock Holmes canon. We're pulling the names out of different stories, but we won't take the murderer James Dodd and turn him into a murderer in *Baker Street*. He might be a police detective. And the Sherlockians—or Holmesians, depending what country you're from—like that."

On the topic of names, Reed offers solutions for non-Sherlockians as to where he and Davis "borrowed" many of the comic's names. *Baker Street*'s main character, the highly deductive and highly visible punker "Harlequin," is Sharon Ford, a play, Reed explains, on Conan Doyle's first choice in names for his famous detective, Sherrinford Holmes. And Sharon's buddy, Inspector Pinner, her contact at Scotland Yard whom she helps solve mysteries (when they interest her) comes from a Harold Pinner who showed up in "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter."

"Noir and Lady Gothic are in keeping with the Victorian setting," says Davis. "They really have nothing to do with Sherlock Holmes. The one gang's name is Gothic and [the gang's leader is] Lady Gothic because I thought it was really cool. The name of Sharon's punk friends, the Irregulars, comes from [Holmes' young assistants], the

All aboard at Mycroft Station.



Standard Scotland Yard detectives.

Baker Street Irregulars."

And as for the most prominent name in the book, Reed explains, "When Conan Doyle wrote about Sherlock Holmes, Baker Street was only three or four blocks long. There never was a 221B [at that time]. So, instead of changing the name of the street, we now have it running from Regent's Park all the way down, so it's a much longer street and that's where everything is focalized. And it's the punk scene of the city. It's like Chelsea was in the '70s."

Part of the way Reed and Davis try to straddle the line between establishing a Holmesian atmosphere without going overboard lies in the theme of their mysteries.

"We're trying to do things that were big in the Victorian era. We just did a piece on jade artifacts, we have plans for a 'Ripper' mystery and for a mystery recalling *The Phantom of the Opera*," says Davis.

As to how the work on *Baker Street* is divided, Davis and Reed both admit the first several issues were evenly split, but due to his other responsibilities, Reed is slowly giving the book to Davis.

"We did most of the plotting in a three-hour session," remembers Reed. "We just established who the characters were and their relationships. Guy goes through the plots and lays them out and does some rough scripting. Then, I go through. At first, I was rewriting the book, then Guy would put in some punk touches. Now, Guy pretty much writes the book himself. I'm doing more than an editor would, but not as much as a co-writer. Guy does the artwork. It's turning into Guy's book. I'm a co-plotter and editor."

Baker Street also offers a challenge to the team as they present a strong female lead in a still male character-dominated industry.

"[Having female characters as leads] is a turn-off for many people, although the book seems to have a high female readership," says Reed, who has been watching who buys which Caliber titles from his three stories. "Many of our books do, like *The Crow* and *Baker Street*. Most of the letters we get on those books are from females."

"There's not that much out there, really, as far as comics for women," Davis adds. 'I know when I started doing *Baker Street*, I didn't want to do something that was stereotypically against women—or punks, for that matter. In comics, both of those groups are really put down. And I think by writing about both and doing a mystery where it's a *thinking* mystery, it's *not* insulting."

"Actually, their sex is irrelevant as far as what's going on with the characters," continues Reed. "I mean, it's really not played on that much. It will be in upcoming issues, but this isn't the typical situation where [the female characters] have to be saved by Pinner; he doesn't come in and save them because they're females and they can't handle it."

All Art: Courtesy Caliber Press

In disguise, Sharon investigates the punk club, the Baskervilles.

Lady Gothic and Noir, punk rulers.

"And Sue's the innocent," says Davis, "so it doesn't matter what sex she is. Sue is thrown into this world and she's terrified, but fascinated by it at the same time."

"Sam just runs around in gangs so she's just a tough cookie," Reed says.

Davis and Reed believe Sharon's background with Scotland Yard, as discussed by Sue and Inspector Pinner in issue #2, lends even more credibility to Sharon's intellectual prowess and inner strength, as well as explains *why* she would want to help the police solve certain crimes.

"Otherwise," says Reed, "it's pretty unrealistic to expect someone to have so many police connections. It establishes her credentials and her contacts. And, of course, it will be played up more in later issues that not all of her contacts are good. It will play a *big* role in issues #6-9."

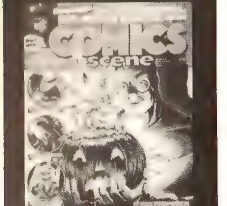
While the punk theme has been an overall success so far, according to Reed, the pair has been questioned on whether or not the punk movement would have started in their alternate universe at all. But Davis, who is a self-proclaimed punker (with "six foot tall spiked hair," teases Reed), gives his explanation of the punk scene.

"If anything, [the punk movement] came because of the way working conditions were in England. There was no advancement for young kids growing up. There weren't any good jobs unless you had a good education. The punk attitude has *nothing* to do with the war and father figures."

"I think it had to do with the rebellion in the '60s," says the older Reed.

(continued on page 52)

INSIDE
THE COMIC BOOK WORLD



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DICK TRACY

(continued from page 12)

the same way."

Sets on the Universal backlot were also painted in the style of the color comic strip. "Could took his colors and he accented his buildings with them," remarks Sylbert. "So, we started painting in a similar fashion—gingerly at first, since we didn't know what it was going to cost. But after the first few days of rushes, we got more and more enthusiastic about the idea."

The more "outrageous" he got, says Sylbert (who worked closely with art director Harold Michaelson and illustrator Leon Harris), the better the results were. "It meant painting every single object: every single piece of furniture, every car, every piece of upholstery, *everything*. I made the first quarter-inch drawings myself, in scale, for every set in the picture. I turned them over to a draftsman, who then made them larger. As I walked around with the painter, I decided what it set was to be red, blue or green, and what color each chair and piece of carpeting would be. As we progressed, we knew enough to be that much smarter about future decisions."

In devising their color strategy, Sylbert and his associates kept in mind the fact that the film was set primarily at night. "The world of night is *not* a world of color," he notes. "You take away the light and the pigment is gone. But we *could* control the amount of color you could see. Many years ago, Vittorio discovered something about film that, without getting too technical about it, puts the silver back into the printing process. To short, it makes the blacks richer, the whites whiter—it takes the vulgarity out of the color, if you will."

As for Warren Beatty, whom Sylbert counts as a close friend, the designer calls him "an extraordinary man, extremely knowledgeable. He has genes with brains in them. But Warren is not the kind of director who is interested in the mechanics of moviemaking; he's much more interested in the emotional dynamics of the narrative, and how the performances elicit a certain emotional response. He has a mind like a steel trap. You ask Warren a question, he ends up asking *you* questions. You answer the question, he says, 'Why?' He's very, very considered—you know the script is being written, you just don't know how fast. That's why it took so long to get *Dick Tracy* made. He's very cautious. He's going to wait until it's right."

As for the Beatty temperament, Sylbert reports that his boss "got excited only when he was tired. When you're producing, directing, writing and acting in a movie, you're on overload. He treated people wonderfully, considering. I would have slugged somebody had I been in his shoes! He very seldom explodes.

"But his instincts are good, and he's tougher on himself than anyone else. The trip with Warren is to take the problems away from him; he's a serious actor/director. All things considered, I would rather work with someone who's overconcerned and cares too much than somebody who doesn't."

Lest anyone think that Beatty is too vain to have considered burying his handsome features beneath prosthetics—which were used extensively to bring the supporting villains to life—Sylbert says Beatty *did* undergo a makeup test to give him the Tracy profile. "Rob Bottin tried a prosthetic nose and a chin on Warren. Warren said it made him look like a Lebanese arms dealer. Then, Warren thought about it: If you intellectualize it, he said, you realize that there's *no one* who looks like Dick Tracy. Dick Tracy is just a good-looking guy you can't cast anybody who actually resembles him. And, if you stick foam appliances on an actor like Warren, he doesn't even look attractive anymore, and his character is supposed to be a handsome guy."

Similarities between *Dick Tracy* and *Batman*, Sylbert says, are nonexistent. "I have no opinions about *Batman*, meaning it's nobody's business what I think of that picture. But *Batman* is not about apple pie. It's a whole different mindset—it's about one man's drive to apprehend a clown-faced criminal. The only thing *Dick Tracy* might have in common with *Batman* is that it's a purely American vision about gangsters trying to take over a city. Dark? All the comics of that era were dark. And they were all nonspecific, too, with the possible exception of *Tarzan* and *Prince Valiant*."

And how pleased by his work is Sylbert, who is his own worst critic? "I haven't seen the final cut yet, so I can't say. My feeling is, *Bonnie and Clyde, Shampoo, Heaven Can Wait* and *Reds* all were much, much better than they had to be—they were almost *too* good," he concludes. "The only thing I worry about as far as *Dick Tracy* is that this picture is also too good—that its charm, the delicacy of its execution, could be more than is required."

As to the film's overall quality, Richard Sylbert says slyly, "Look at it this way: We've got Stephen Sondheim writing the songs. *Batman* had Prince."

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When scrambling the adventures of the "Teenage

WRITERS

By T.L. JOHNS

Photos: Timothy White

"The one thing we all agreed on was that there be no blood in the film, and there is none," promises writer Bobby Herbeck. So, Raphael's sais will remain clean.

Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman, the characters' creators, said that they would "never in a million years" believe someone would attempt the feat. But it happened. *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is now a movie, a live-action film currently unspooling in theaters.

Compared with many movies, this *Turtles* project was assembled quickly—a little more than two years from idea to finished product. Two of the people who shaped the movie are writers Bobby Herbeck and Todd W. Langen. Herbeck spent as much time as he could devising a story that Eastman and Laird would approve, while Langen (who wrote the finished screenplay) hopes that with his help, the movie will become a favorite, not only with kids, but with college students and older audiences.

The real beginnings of the live-action *Turtles*, however, can be traced to a rather famous fan of the comic books, one with an off-center sense of humor.

"A friend of mine who was the producer and director for the comedian Gallagher's Showtime specials, Kim Dawson, came to me with this *Ninja Turtles* thing," begins Herbeck. "And I, like everyone else, went, 'Teenage, mutant, what? What are you talking about?' Especially adults. Kids, all they have to do is hear one word and they know exactly what you're talking about. You say, 'Mutant,' and they go, 'Ninja Turtles.'

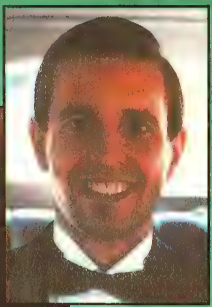
"Kim said that Gallagher and his manager Gary Proper had discovered this comic, as only Gallagher, being the child that he really is, would discover. They had been trying to get the film rights and it hadn't happened when Dawson came to me."

Herbeck, a professional actor and stand-up comedian who has worked on such TV shows as *Diff'rent Strokes*, *The Jeffersons*, *Gimme a Break* and currently *Bagdad Cafe*, has always written his own material. He began writing professionally while "punching up" scripts for the sitcoms he was working with as an audience pre-show warm-up comedian. He soon began selling original scripts to these same sitcoms and served as a writer on the syndicated series *Small Wonder* for four years.

"I met Tom Gray [head of Golden

Mutant Ninja Turtles," you have to break a few eggs.

ON THE HALF-SHELL



In each of their separate versions of the script, both Bobby Herbeck (below) and Todd W. Langen (left) tried to make a clear distinction in the Turtles' personalities, so that pizza party animal Michaelangelo (far left) wouldn't be the only one to stand out.

Photo: Courtesy Todd W. Langen

Turtles Photos: Copyright 1989 Northshore Investments Ltd.

Photo: Courtesy Bobby Herbeck

Harvest Studios, the movie's production company, see CS #12] when I was doing a club act," Herbeck continues. "We were shooting the bull and he wanted to know if I did any of my own writing and I said absolutely. He asked if I wrote motion pictures, and I told him no, that I had been writing TV, but that I had some picture ideas."

At that point, Herbeck and Gray talked about some of Herbeck's upcoming projects; one, *Department Store: The Movie*, is scheduled to shoot this year. Soon after, Herbeck and Dawson met and discussed the *Turtles* project. Then came the meeting between Herbeck, Dawson and Gray.

"It took three months to get Tom to, as we in the business say, 'take a meeting' with us," laughs Herbeck.

"Now, this is one of my favorite stories and it's the honest-to-God's truth. We went to lunch and we had the color *Turtles* graphic novels sitting on the table. We were talking about *Ninja Turtles* and Kim kept stressing putting four major stars in the Turtle costumes for the movie. Well, I'm kicking him under the table, because right away, Tom is looking at anywhere from $10 to $20 million in salaries. I keep saying, 'No, you *don't* need stars in there. You can have them do the voices, but you don't need them in the costumes.' So, we had a nice lunch and about an hour-and-a-half later, Tom said, 'Well, fellows, thanks for taking the time, I enjoyed the lunch, but I've got so many projects to go, this just isn't something we would be interested in.'

"And he was sliding out of the booth and I swear to you, he had one butt cheek off the seat and as he was saying goodbye, he started thumbing through the comic and suddenly, I just saw him freeze. Once he saw the color, he said, 'Wait a minute...' and slid back in the booth. I'm kicking Kim under the table, and I thought, 'My God, we've got him! Now, just reel him in slowly....' So, Tom went through the book and asked us some questions and the light went on for him. He said, 'You know what. I don't think we need to put stars in the Turtle costumes.' This was July 1988. Next thing I know, the deal's being made, they get a hold of Mirage Studios and Kevin and Peter, and I'm on my way to their offices."

James Saito brings the Shredder's evil to life. As in the early comics, he is responsible for the murder of Splinter's master, and plans the same for the Turtles and their sensei.

Todd Langen never met with Peter Laird or Kevin Eastman and Laird (CS #1, 9). Their approval was very much a key factor in the film, but Herbeck worked extensively with the duo while working between the original two.

"I guess those comments getting a story that was acceptable to those two," says Herbeck. "Part of the idea to do the film was to come up with a story acceptable to them. Then, at that point, they would sign a contract saying it was now our baby and we could go do what we wanted with it.

"The only thing that was difficult was they're so opposite of each other. We would agree on something to be working, then I would go back to the hotel room and they would [say], 'Oh, no, next day we would meet. Kevin would go, 'Yeah, yeah, I like this, I like this a lot, but you have to get Leonardo in there.' Peter would scream, 'Leonardo is a wuss. He's always whining and crying and he's a wimp. He's the opposite of the two, the more intense. I would say

Photo: Alan Markfield

"This is no *Howard the Duck*," announces Langea. The Turtles will take on anyone who says otherwise.

[illegible] the problem, Peter[illegible] and he [illegible]ses. Well, I've got a problem [illegible]. It took a long time because [illegible] the are *them* Turtles. They [illegible] them and, rightfully so, they [illegible] to make sure that we were [illegible] their vision was and that we didn't rape the Turtles.

"I worked really well with them. We really turned each other on creatively."

After spending time with Eastman and Laird and doing research on ninja beliefs, Herbeck studied the popular *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* cartoons (CS #5) and read everything that Laird and Eastman had ever done with the characters.

"The one thing I found that was needed for this, and Peter and Kevin agreed with me, was that if you were blind, the only Turtle that you could decipher from the rest of the pack was Michaelangelo because his attitude was set, especially in the cartoons. If anything, what I worked hard for was to try to give them four distinctive personalities."

After completing his research, Herbeck was flown to England to brainstorm and work with the movie's director, Steve Barron.

"I was in London for a couple of months, plotting. Then, I came back here [to California] and wrote with guns to my head.

"They were in such a hurry to get it done," Herbeck says with a tinge of regret in his voice. "It's something I wrote in *30 days*, which I wasn't happy about, but that's the time that I had because of the schedule. Then, they got Jim Henson on board when I was in London and a lot of money was being spent without money coming in and it became a nightmare. Once that script gets going and they start putting the production together, it becomes craziness."

When Herbeck finished his script and turned it in, Langen inherited the craziness. Langen, a former aerospace engineer who worked for various companies including NASA, made his move to Los Angeles in 1983. His writing years until 1986 were spent, like Herbeck, selling half-hour and hour-long TV scripts, only on a freelance basis. He soon decided it was time to write full-time.

"I felt I had enough experience to try to live on my writing," Langen explains, adding that he then hired a literary agent. Langen is now the story editor of *The Wonder Years*, and was pulled into *Turtles* after being contacted by Limelight Productions in a search for "creative people."

"I thought it was a little strange when I first heard about *Turtles* on *Entertainment Tonight*. I asked if it was going to be done in animation and I was told no, live action."

Once he agreed to the project, Langen also plunged into Eastman and Laird's comic-book world, because he felt "they should be an integral part of the movie." However, he deliberately did not watch any of the cartoons to stay away from what he calls "kiddie ideas." After he read Herbeck's story, he listed what problems he found with it and after conferring with director Barron, dug into the rewrite.

"I wanted to elevate the script above the kid level. I wanted it to be like the comic books, to appeal to adults. That was the comic's appeal to me. There were three main things I was asked to do when I took over: restructure the plot, give more depth to the characters, and elevate the dialogue to a more sophisticated level."

Comments Langen, "I had to clearly delineate the personalities, make a stronger division. Instead of having [the Turtles] all similar, make them more different. Now all four have distinct personalities. Each has his own idiosyncracy. And the humor. I added a lot of humor. Now, it's more of a comedy. It's a very funny movie. I wanted to make seeing this film a fun experience for people."

With a leap through a sewer hole, April O'Neil (Judith Hoag) and audience will enter Turtleland.

Photo: Alan Markfield

Herbeck's story was a great start, Langen admits, but Langen believed that it needed refining. "Before, too much of the story was being told. During act one, everyone knew something about everybody. Now, the plot is more of a discovery. The movie is also much darker."

Even though Herbeck, who was able to see Langen's final draft before shooting started, says he feels Langen's screenplay was very much what *he* had in mind, Herbeck still would have liked to have had another opportunity to work on the script.

"Todd came in and did the second rewrite," Herbeck says, "which is not unusual in this business. And this was my first movie. But Todd did a terrific job. I saw a screening and he really did a hell of a job. It has been a team effort. Todd and I never really met each other, but we talked over the phone. I got story credit because I—actually we—spent so much time on the story. In all honesty, I think the credit should be 'Story by Bobby Herbeck, Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman and Tom Gray.' In fairness

Is the Turtles' fearless leader, Leonardo, criticizing the rap-style song written specifically for the film?

Photo: Alan Markfield

Photo: Alan Weisfeld

SPLINTER, WAIT!— TAKE LEO AND GO FOR THE SEWERS! WE'LL FOLLOW WHEN WE SECURE THIS FLOOR! LOOKS LIKE THE JUNK SHOP IS OUR BEST WAY OUT!
BACK THE WAY YOU CAME, BUTTHEAD!
I CAN WALK.

Art: Kevin Eastman & Peter Laird/Colors: Ryan Brown, Michael Dooney, Jim Lawson, Steve Leialoha/Courtesy Mirage Studios

Herbeck notes that director Steve Barron went as far as to use pages from the comic as storyboards.

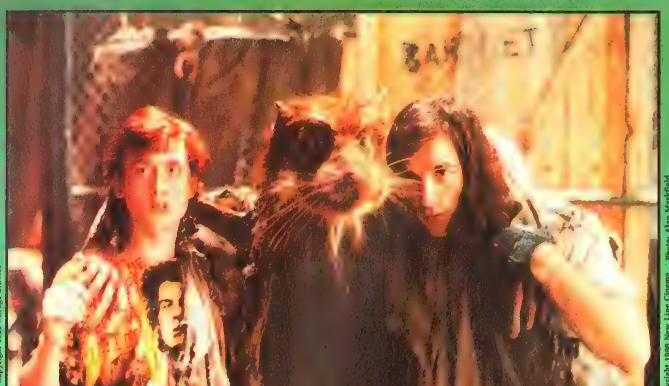
to everyone, there were many people involved in putting the story together.

"The difference between Todd's script and mine was when I handed my script in, that was the first time everybody had given me all of their input. Everybody's stuff was in my draft. That was the prototype. When they got that script, the natural thing is to tear the hell out of it. They needed to see it written.

"I would have liked to have had a shot at another rewrite after that meeting," muses Herbeck. "But they didn't have time. They brought in Todd for the second write and Todd was privy to some ideas that sprang forth after they saw my draft. And they saw things that wouldn't work that I *said* wouldn't work. I won't be specific, but once they saw it written out, they realized it wouldn't work."

Both Herbeck and Langen agree that devoted *Turtles* comics readers won't be disappointed by the film. In fact, according to Herbeck, director Steve Barron occasionally used the comics as storyboards. But other elements have been altered. A romantic relationship develops between TV news personality April O'Neil and Casey Jones (in full hockey mask attire), but April still hangs out with the Turtles down in the sewers and Splinter still guides the Turtles through this confusing world.

"We also dealt a lot with latchkey kids caught up in this network," confides Herbeck. "How kids can easily be persuaded is what I'm getting at.



Turtles Characters: Copyright 1990 Mirage Studios

Turtles Photos: Copyright 1990 New Line Cinema Photo: Alan Markfield

The two writers are split as to who will steal the movie. Langen sees a "modern-day Han Solo" in Elias Koteas' Casey Jones (right), while Herbeck's vote is for Splinter. Maybe it'll be lost boy Danny Pennington (Michael Turney).

We steered clear of drugs. We talked about the part of the story where kids were involved with drugs, but we decided we didn't want to do that."

Herbeck contends that the drug issue could be used in the future. "I feel that you could take the four Turtles in their costumes around the country and do an anti-drug campaign that would knock this country on its butt. Kids really listen to those Turtles."

None of the comics' science-fiction concepts, aside from the Turtles origins, are on display. And neither Herbeck nor Langen had any specific actors in mind while writing. Instead, they both focused on making the Turtles as believable as possible.

"This will not be another *Batman* in that I felt that that movie had no soul," Langen observes. "I really didn't give a damn about the characters. The audience will get warm, personable characters they'll care about in *Turtles*."

"One of my ideas that got lost in the shuffle," Herbeck says, "even though its tone is still there to some extent, is that I saw the Turtles as four brothers, and any kids—brothers, sisters, any combination—are going to have their problems with each other. I thought the Turtles should have those problems and conflicts among themselves, too. I even had one scene where Raphael just sits down with Splinter and expresses to him, 'I think you don't really love me. Leonardo's the one you care about, not me,' because I had Splinter giving Raphael a hard time. That made it for me very lifelike, because those problems exist. But that scene became too literal for what they wanted.

"To be honest, I just wasn't given the time to even look back and do anything about it. It was such a pressure situation. But there are many things, I still think, that make the Turtles real enough for a kid to say, 'Gee, Donatello, I have that problem at home,' and they can watch how the Turtles work it out yet still hang in together."

The writers disagree as to just who walks off with the movie.

"Casey Jones has the possibility of stealing the show," says a confident Langen. "I see him as a modern-day Han Solo. He'll be the one people will warm up to the most. He has his hockey mask [which has been compared to Jason's in the *Friday the 13th* flicks], but he usually loses it during the fight."

Herbeck has another candidate. "It's Splinter. You will absolutely fall in love with him. I mean, here's, of all things, this big rat, but you just love him! It's like an E.T. thing where even though he's ugly, everyone will love him."

But now, the moment of reckoning has come. The movie is in theaters—awaiting the final verdict of fans and moviegoers—and the $12 million investment hangs in the balance.

"Some said that budget wasn't enough, but I couldn't see it," admits Langen. "You could spend more, but why, if you have a thoroughly entertaining movie costing less? Steve Barron has done a real take on the movie. He has a very good visual eye. This is no *Howard the Duck*."

"I think what they did for $12 million is remarkable," acknowledges Herbeck.

As always, the prospect of sequels surfaces. Herbeck has already talked to several people about what might be used in future *Turtles* movies, but Langen feels it's "*way* premature" to consider an encore although he's "ripe to try a treatment" for a follow-up.

"This has a good chance of being a great little movie," Todd Langen says hopefully. "I've been very happy overall with everything I've seen."

"It's a strange thing, isn't it?" muses Bobby Herbeck. "It's a phenomenon. I mean, four mutant ninja turtles. Who would've thunk it?"

The Musical with No Tomorrow

Success has a thousand fathers. "Annie 2" remains an orphan.

By LYNNE STEPHENS

Maybe there's something to be said for superstition. Danielle Findley, the 11-year-old actress chosen to play Annie in the ill-fated *Annie 2: Miss Hannigan's Revenge*, learned she had captured the part on Friday, October 13, 1989.

Perhaps that should have been an early warning. Despite the most valiant efforts by dozens of actors, writers, musicians, set builders and the usual plethora of seasoned theater professionals, *Annie 2* crashed like a drunken duck at its Washington, D.C. out-of-town tryout, dashing all hopes of an easy Broadway landing.

The Kennedy Center audiences had been more than willing to give the production the benefit of the doubt at *Annie 2*'s preview performances in early December 1989. Despite vicious word-of-mouth and an original running time of more than three-and-a-half hours, parents still escorted little girls in frilly Christmas frocks clutching Annie rag dolls into the Opera House auditorium. Just as the original Annie never wavered in her belief that

As Annie 2, Danielle Findley sings her heart out. Her audition tune was, of course, "Tomorrow."

Photo. Rs. & Copyright 1989 Martha Swope

Annie Art & Characters: Copyright 1982, 1990 Tribune Company Syndicate, Inc.
Tomorrow Music: Copyright 1977 Edwin H. Morris & Co. & Charles Strouse.

Congresswoman Christmas (Marian Seldes, left) informs Grace Farrell (Lauren Mitchell) and Warbucks (Harve Presnell) that Annie (Findley) must have a mother. The resulting win-a-bride contest is reminiscent of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Of Thee I Sing*, a musical which also spawned an unsuccessful B

Photos: By & Copyright 1989 Martha Swope

All Annie 2 Photos: Courtesy Annie 2 Production

During the sequel's brief theatrical run, Annie 2 (Danielle Findley) embraces her Sandy (Beau).

she would find a family, ticket purchasers trusted *Annie*'s original production team—author Thomas Meehan, composer Charles Strouse and lyricist and director Martin Charnin—to concoct a sequel that would radiate the same spunk, charm and unabashed sentimentality as the original.

That's not quite what they got.

In the opening scene of *Annie 2*, which occurs a few weeks after the events of the original *Annie*, billionaire Oliver Warbucks (Harve Presnell), his attractive assistant Grace Farrell (Lauren Mitchell) and Annie and her orphan pals have gathered for another day of merrymaking and money harvesting on the 125th floor of the Warbucks Building in New York City. Enter one Congresswoman Marietta Christmas (Marian Seldes), a sour-puss representative of the United Mothers of America, who informs Warbucks that she and her minions will remove Annie from the Warbucks household if Warbucks doesn't find a mother for Annie forthwith. Being an eminently reasonable, level-headed and realistic gentleman, Warbucks immediately determines to hold a contest in order to select a wife for himself as well as a mother for Annie. Warbucks' staff notifies the press that *all* single women in the country are eligible.

During *Annie 2*'s second or third week of previews, director Charnin evidently realized the absurdity of the contest's overly broad criteria. (The absurdity of the contest itself apparently went unnoticed.) Warbucks (and Charnin) amended eligibility to single, blond, musically talented women from the East in order to more closely resemble Farrell, whose beauty and gracious personality have charmed the bald-pated Warbucks more than he would openly admit.

With the premise of *Annie 2* thus gently guided back to utter plausibility, the scene originally shifted to the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village, where an incarcerated Miss Hannigan (Dorothy Loudon) threatened, "You Ain't Seen the Last of Me." The *Annie 2* creative team eliminated this scene in order to reduce the show's running time. Later audiences met Miss Hannigan on an East River pier, resting after her escape from a tramp steamer to South America—a voyage courtesy of Warbucks—and plotting her revenge against Annie with the aide of henchman Lionel McCoy (Ronny Graham). McCoy informs Hannigan of Warbucks' bride contest, and immediately the diabolical duo embark on a scheme that would unite in matrimony Annie's savior and her most despised enemy.

A week later at the Warbucks' estate, the servants' agitation reaches fever pitch. They've been perfectly content to receive orders from Grace Farrell, but who will be replacing her? If it were up to them, they would choose Farrell herself to wed Warbucks. (Their song,

Photo Courtesy Official Annie Magazine

The original Broadway Annies were (clockwise from bottom left) Andrea McArdle, Shelley Bruce, Sarah Jessica Parker and Allison Smith.

"The Lady of the House," sounds somewhat similar to "We Need Him," a tune also written by Strouse for his musical *It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's Superman.*)

On the same day, Warbucks hires McCoy as his chauffeur in a program that offers ex-cons a chance to re-establish themselves in society.

Soon afterwards, McCoy introduces Hannigan to Maurice, a beautician who specializes in makeover miracles for a price. Maurice and his assistants transform the hag Hannigan into a (relatively) presentable, attractive Connecticut yankee ("Beautiful") and send her off to Warbucks' contest in grand style. Originally, the *Annie 2* creative team set the initial phase of Warbucks' competition in Yankee Stadium, leaving Farrell to bemoan Warbucks' apparent emotional indifference in "He Doesn't Know I'm Alive," while surrounded by half-clad baseball players in the Yankees' locker room. Fortunately, wiser heads intervened, trimming the scene and transferring only three of the contest finalists to the Silver Stateroom aboard Warbucks yacht.

Hannigan tugs at Warbucks' heartstrings with stories of a harsh life, an existence amazingly similar to Warbucks' younger days. McCoy's household snooping hits the grand payoff when Warbucks requests that Hannigan return in June for the final round of the contest. The former orphan-minder's glee plummets, however, when Congresswoman Christmas informs her that Annie must help Warbucks select the winning woman.

The final scene of Act I finds Hannigan and McCoy roaming the Fulton Fish Market, in search of a way to eliminate Annie before the critical date in June. Fate answers their prayers by presenting them with Kate, a street urchin who's a dead ringer for Annie. (That's not surprising, as Danielle Findley plays both parts.) Hannigan and McCoy snatch the foul-mouthed, cigarette-smoking Kate and immediately begin grooming her to replace the sweet-tempered redhead.

In the second act, Hannigan and McCoy kidnap Annie during an outing to Coney Island and replace her with Kate. No one notices the switch.

That evening, in Warbucks' penthouse office, the contest finalists nervously gather. At the last moment, Congresswoman Christmas injects herself into the lineup, having determined that living the life of a billionaire's wife might be worth the inconvenience of instant motherhood. During the talent competition, Warbucks and his buddy Franklin Delano Roosevelt dash her dreams, however, when both men halt her only a few bars into her vocal rendition of "Tomorrow," declaring that they've heard that song once too often.

On the other hand, by singing Warbucks favorite childhood lullaby, Hannigan wins the evening, and Kate (as Annie) approves Warbucks' selection right on cue.

Farrell, fortunately, senses something odd about little "Annie." (Could it be she has mispronounced FDR's name once too often? Certainly her nicotine breath should have given it away...) Only moments before Warbucks is to marry Hannigan aboard his yacht, Farrell discovers the real Annie, bound and gagged in Hannigan's honeymoon steamer trunk. Warbucks' wedding guests capture McCoy and Hannigan, who, this time, won't be let off so lightly. Warbucks, driven to sanity by this close call, reveals his passion for Farrell and, never one to waste good wedding preparations, takes her as his bride while a beaming Annie and company look on ("When You Smile"). Curtain down.

During the film's making, the movie Annie (Aileen Quinn) embraces her Sandy (Bingo).

Photo: Copyright 1981 Columbia Pictures

Why *Annie 2*? A few potent numbers from the first *Annie* provide a partial answer: *Annie* ran on Broadway for five years and 2,377 performances, which at the time placed it seventh on the list of longest-running Broadway musicals. When it closed on January 2, 1983, the saga of Harold Gray's pupil-less cartoon orphan and her dog Sandy had earned its investors a cool $19 million profit on an initial total investment of $800,000.

Annie made its 13-year-old lead Andrea McArdle a household name and granted her a tickle of flickering fame; later Annies included Shelley Bruce, Sarah Jessica Parker (eventually of TV's *Square Pegs*), Allison Smith (later of *Kate & Allie*) and the inevitable film version's Aileen Quinn. *Annie* introduced a

legion of young girls to "Tomorrow," that generation's "Memories." And it generously lined the coffers of Meehan, Strouse and Charnin.

Perhaps the balance of the answer to "Why *Annie 2*?" can be found in illogical human nature—the persistent belief, despite heavy odds to the contrary, that lightning will strike twice in the same place.

True, certain film properties continue to trot out, assembly-line fashion, with new Roman numerals affixed to their ends. So, it's surprising to learn that in the history of modern theater, there has yet to be a successful sequel. Strouse himself had attempted to *Bring Back Birdie* in an effort to reproduce the immortality of his earlier hit *Bye Bye Birdie*, but the results had been laughed off the stage. The creative team of *Annie 2* avoided the term "sequel," preferring the term "continuation" and ignoring Shakespeare's eternal truism: A rose by any other name will still get plucked by skeptical critics.

Even before the original *Annie* closed on Broadway, Charnin had displayed an interest in creating a follow-up, and had suggested, optimistically, that *Annie 2* might be a "go" as early as summer 1983. In press announcements of that year, he revealed a seven-word plot: Hannigan escapes from jail and seeks revenge. Seven years later, Charnin was to admit that this plot idea, more than any other aspect of *Annie 2*, had been his most costly, horrific mistake.

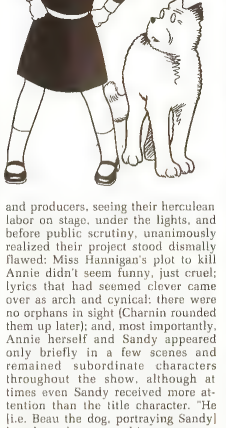
Theater being theater, Charnin never realized his dream of a 1983 opening. Not until 1987 did the plot, producers and general initiative truly coalesce into a tangible, albeit embryonic project. After securing financial support, *Annie 2* took its first faltering public steps in early September 1989 during a three-city open casting call designed primarily as a publicity stunt. Although *Annie 2*'s creative team auditioned hundreds of young girls for the title role, Charnin eventually chose Danielle Findley, an 11-year-old actress from Lees Summit, Missouri. Findley was already familiar with the red-haired moppet, having starred in *Annie* tours in Kansas City, Detroit and St. Louis.

"[My agent] called us up one day and said, 'They're making *Annie 2*, so I'll call you whenever the auditions come,'" recalls Findley. "I had a private audition." Findley, following the course charted by previous hordes of hopefuls, belted the de rigueur mantra ("I sang 'Tomorrow'"), but unlike most of the others, Findley stood out to Charnin as an excellent singer with strong technique.

Findley's casting concluded the search for *Annie 2*'s primary acting complement, all of whom were already familiar with the show's illustrious predecessor: Dorothy Loudon, the original Tony award-winning Miss Hannigan, and Harve Presnell and Lauren Mitchell as Daddy Warbucks and Grace Farrell, both Broadway *Annie* veterans.

Rehearsals began November 6 in New York City. During the next five weeks, Charnin cut, chipped and chiseled the original book into the form that would eventually be presented on the Kennedy Center stage. His original concept, however, remained intact.

But the first preview performance on December 22 punctured everyone's hope of instant acceptance. Even dancing Smurfs, the New Kids on the Block and Santa Claus couldn't have kept the young ones from fidgeting before the three-and-a-half hour performance concluded. The creative team



and producers, seeing their herculean labor on stage, under the lights, and before public scrutiny, unanimously realized their project stood dismally flawed: Miss Hannigan's plot to kill Annie didn't seem funny, just cruel; lyrics that had seemed clever came over as arch and cynical; there were no orphans in sight (Charnin rounded them up later); and, most importantly, Annie herself and Sandy appeared only briefly in a few scenes and remained subordinate characters throughout the show, although at times even Sandy received more attention than the title character. "He [i.e. Beau the dog, portraying Sandy] has done the wrong thing on stage a couple of times," says Findley. "He lifted his leg up and lifted his neck up and scratched his neck with his hind leg. It was during my very serious song 'Changes.' Every single person in the audience cracked up."

The show undeniably belonged to Miss Hannigan. Dorothy Loudon, bearing the brunt of the pressure to carry a structurally weak show, continually awoke with nightmares. To ease her tensions, Charnin evidently permitted Loudon to introduce changes in her script more slowly than the rest of the cast, but this kindness didn't sit well with Findley. When script changes would come, "she [Loudon] says, 'I'm not doing this until next week,' which is not a very fair thing to the other actors because they have to do it right then," notes Findley. "But she's the star so she can do everything. It makes everybody mad."

Although the producers delayed opening night for one week in a defensive maneuver designed to buy the creative team some time to effect corrections, it wasn't enough. The first reviews arrived January 4, and they were scathing. Hap Erstein of *The Washington Times* barked, "Arf," and gave it one star. David Richards of *The Washington Post* put it more eloquently, if less succinctly: "*Annie* was a musical to take to your heart, but you'll want to take a paddle to *Annie 2*." Other critics joined the Washington media in a disapproving Greek chorus of raspberries. The only faint accolades to arise praised the costumes and David Mitchell's eye-popping sets, including a tugboat realistically tossed in the "wake" of a passing ocean liner.

Charnin didn't disagree with the negative reviews. By the time the professionals had scoured his labors, he had been quietly chastened by the bewilderment of hundreds of pint-sized amateurs in the audience. Seeing their disappointment in a production geared more for worldly adults than star-gazing children, Charnin told *The Washington Post*, "[We] were putting on a show that was for our intellect and our cynicism, as opposed to our heart and spirit. We outsmarted ourselves...because at the first preview, there were 700 children in the audience who could not care less about this un-Annied *Annie*."

Still, as of early January, *Annie 2* hadn't received a mortal blow. Maintaining a cheery optimism that Annie herself would have been impressed to emulate, Charnin rallied the troops, cast and crew alike, for a comeback. The man who wrote "Tomorrow" promised to make the sun come out for *Annie 2* through frenetic backstage rewrites, with a concentrated intensity reserved for the rat that re-enters a sinking ship, hop-

(continued on page 52)

The Better Part of Squalor

By SCOTT LOBDELL

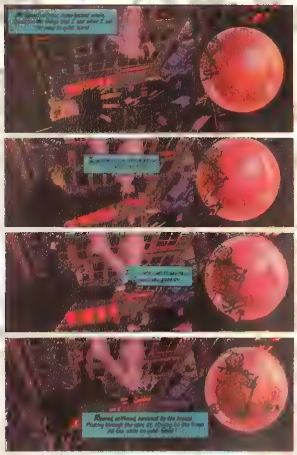
It's been said, "There is no future in the past."

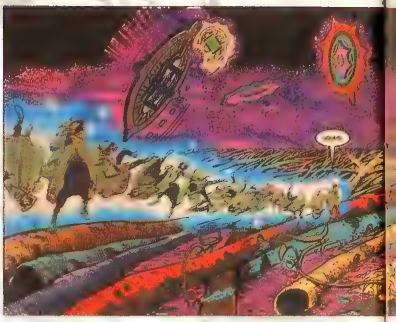
It has also been said, "There's no time like the present," "A stitch in time saves nine," and "Time and tide wait for no man." Of the chronologically conflicting *Squalor*, a four-issue mini-series from First Comics, it can be said, "Ageless pearls of wisdom need not apply."

At first glance, the story by neophyte comic book writer Stefan Petrucha is oft-times quite confusing. After one gets the hang of it, however, it gets ... more confusing. But in a marketplace dominated by mutant angst and slam-bang slugfests, *Squalor* may be an idea whose time has come.

The story focuses on Harry Keller, a brilliant but disturbed double-doctorate endowed librarian who is forced to trade his poverty level trappings to become the Earth's savior. If this all took place in, say, Newark, New Jersey, Harry's adventures might be a bit more ... linear. As it is, he's constantly traversing the ever-alternating terrain that is the A-time. This mysterious otherplace where past, present and future exist at once is jointly ruled by the

Art: Jeff Porter





Art: Tom Sutton/Colors: Paul Mounts

"One of the biggest differences between *Squalor* and the typical adventure tale is that half the story is trying to figure out *what* the story is," confesses writer Stefan Petrucha.

time-honored illustrator Tom Sutton and Paul Mounts, who provides the computer-generated color.

Asked how he would explain the complex storyline to the casual reader, Petrucha ponders. "Hmmmm. Good question."

"Basically it's the story of a young gentleman who has had various mental problems. Harry's something of an academician who's studying time. He has achieved a timeless state of consciousness which has affected both his conscious and his sub-conscious mind so he gets bombarded by a lot of information from the past, present and future at the same time, and he must come to terms with his perceptions. That's Harry's story on one level, which is also the story of him trying to heal himself."

There's more.

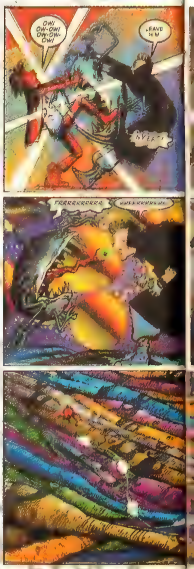
"It's also an ... " Petrucha begins, grasping for just the right explanation. "I don't know if 'adventure story' is the right term. But it's an adventure story where there's an insidious plot going on that Harry has to try to figure out.

"One of the biggest differences between *Squalor* and the typical adventure tale is that half the story is trying to figure out *what* the story is. The conflict isn't so much 'who's fighting whom, but 'who knows what's going on and how to find out.' Hence, the story's real climax is when Harry finally figures out what the plot is, why he has been drawn to it, and how he resolves it.

"It's pretty much told from Harry's perspective, which is one of the reasons I got to do it in a non-linear fashion. It bounces around for a while, there are many things that don't make sense at first and then later do."

Petrucha concedes, keeping in mind that 'later' is a subjective term. "It's a straightforward story that has been arranged differently. Hopefully, it's like a puzzle where the readers have enough to go on, but they don't have the whole picture until the end."

While the slightly skewed scientific slant of the story might intimidate anyone not possessed of a physics degree, Petrucha assures it's not nearly as heady as it all sounds. "The technical aspects I just kind of fake," he laughs, "just enough to make it reasonably rational and accessible on some level."



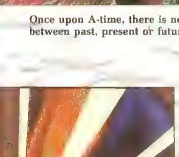
All Squalor Art & Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1989, 1990 First Publishing

Art: Tom Sutton/Colors: Paul Mounts

Once upon A-time, there is no distinction between past, present or future.

Art: Tom Sutton/Colors: Paul Mounts

"I tried to pull from readings outside of comics so that I could bring in something to it that would be new," notes Petrucha.



Art: Tom Sutton/Colors: Paul Mounts

"It's pretty much told from Harry's perspective," explains Petrucha. "There are many things that don't make sense at first and later do."

As to the genesis of this non-mainstream title making its way onto the stands, Petrucha begins a story as old as time itself. "I *always* wanted to write stories for a living, and saw comics as a great place to do that. Like any struggling writer, I had written a number of screenplays and sent them out, a novel and sent that around, and wound up with a huge stack of rejection letters over the course of about 10 years.

'I had done a couple of inventory stories for Marvel that weren't too successful," he admits, noting one early attempt that was a Man-Thing tale based on Samuel Beckett's *End Game*. "What I found myself doing was writing very structured stories that I was unhappy with. If you're a newcomer, nobody's going to give you a free hand to play around with established characters—*especially* with some of the stranger things that I wanted to do.

"I ended up getting very frustrated for a number of reasons: because of delays and because no one was paying me thousands of dollars. So finally, I sat down and decided that rather than try to get into Marvel or DC, I would write something that I liked and try to sell it to one of the independents.

"The three-page proposal was summarily rejected. But I really liked the idea for *Squalor*, so . . ." begins Petrucha in what could be construed as rather drastic advice to potential comic book writers, "what I ended up doing was sitting down and writing a *full* script for the first issue of a proposed series."

Timing, as they say, is everything.

"Usually, it would take two or three months before I got any response. A week later, I got a call from [editor] Rick Oliver from First. He loved it, and we took it from there.

"For the longest time, the biggest problem was finding the right artist. Then, Rick called up Tom Sutton and told him they had a series and asked him if he was interested in doing it. Tom said, 'What's it called?' They said, '*Squalor*,' and he said, 'I'll do it.'

"The best part about working with Tom is that he got exactly what I was talking about from the scripts—and

more so. He also added his own flavor and feel to it. I've really been happy to work with him."

Proud of the project as a whole, Petrucha is quick to rave about the entire creative team. "The series' colorist, Paul Mounts, really went crazy with the coloring work. He drew in bricks and woodwork on the floor in Harry's loft. All the computer-generated backgrounds in A-Time are his."

Having tried more conventional storytelling techniques during his earlier stories, Petrucha is critical without criticizing old styles. "One of the problems of any media that has been around too long is that it starts to become self-reflective, like TV writers starting to imitate TV writers.

"But Stan Lee and any of the other major names and talents always pulled their sources from other media. I hate to use the term 'high art,' but Stan was always quoting Shakespeare and *Paradise Lost* by Milton in *Silver Surfer*—which is where the impetus for that came from.

"I tried to pull from readings outside of comics so that I could bring in something to it that would be new," says Petrucha, citing "*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, which was definitely an influence on Harry's character and the way the

(continued on page 67)

Art: Jeff Potter

JK

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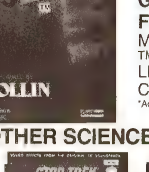

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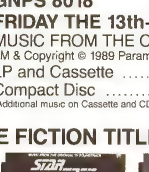

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475 Park Avenue South, 8th Flr.
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...Three pieces of my artwork appeared in Kyle Counts' article on Betty Boop's 60th birthday in COMICS SCENE #12, and since I was not invited to the big party at the Hard Rock Cafe [after being kept in suspense by the brass at King Features for a month as to whether I would be], I feel the urge to claim credit. The big "60 Years" piece on page 57 was pencilled last spring by the excellent Joe Kovich and inked by yours truly. Betty emerging from the inkwell was rendered by me around the same time and I did the heart vignette of Betty and Pudgy on page 59 way back in '85 when King first hired me.

I took as my text Leslie Cabarga's *The Fleischer Story* (Da Capo Press) which is full of '30s animation style guides. Leslie did all those wonderful airbrushed greeting cards with Betty in the late '70s and early '80s.

Since '85, I've done 95% of the line art for licensing: T-shirts, posters, shower curtains, lunch boxes, etc. Over 300 pieces!

Credit should also go to Grim Natwick, who designed the Boopster back in '31 and at the age of 98 has still received no royalties from Betty's corporate masters. Work-for-hire is a rough system. If I had a nickel for every T-shirt, I could move out of this garrett.

Thanks for listening.

Ned Sonntag
NYC, NY

For Grim Natwick's Boop memories, see page 63.

...George Perez is not alone in trying to rework the relationship between Wonder Woman and Superman. I'm working on it, too.

Those are my words in the panel from *Wonder Woman* #37 [page 49] which you chose to use as an illustration for your article on George in COMICS SCENE #11. Since you gave credit where credit is due for the artwork, I find it ill-considered of you not to give credit where credit is due for the dialogue. Your caption underneath the panel was, in fact, misleading, indicating to the reader that George is writing the book as well as plotting it.

Unlike George, I have very little autonomy on *Wonder Woman*. Don't misunderstand, no one is holding a gun to my head and making me write the book. I was hired for a year [12 issues]. [Editor] Karen Berger and George are both great and easy to work with. I enjoy the character, and I like shaping the personalities of everyone in the book by their words. Any frustrations I have are my own, since I accepted the assignment with my eyes open. I feel I have a professional obligation to stay until the year is up. Besides, nothing has happened to make me seriously reconsider...in other words, no *Swamp Thing* liascos—though something definitely came close.

So I don't have a lot of autonomy. What I do have is a credit on the cover and on the title page. I'd appreciate a credit somewhere within your magazine, and an apology. Because aside from the credit, I also have quite a bit of pride in my work.

Mindy Newell
Bayonne, NJ

Although we regret that Newell was not credited, the focus of Patrick Daniel O'Neill's article was on Perez's Superman *work, not* Wonder Woman *(which was only briefly mentioned). We also don't feel the caption cited ("Unsatisfied with how Superman and Wonder Woman's romance turned out, Perez has tried to rework the relationship.") is misleading. It's the writer who does the plot (usually in consultation with the comic's editors) -not the writer doing the dialogue—who makes such storyline changes as "reworking" relationships ...I go months at a time without reading your magazine, but when I do, I am grateful for the serious and close look at the comics scene that this magazine presents. However, I would like to offer some constructive criticism.*

First, your coverage. Lately, you have been giving *too* much coverage to *Roger Rabbit* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. I realize these characters help sell your magazine, but coverage of them has been excessive. Some of us find them childish. What I and other of your readers would like to see is coverage of some of the smaller comics companies such as Eclipse, First and Dark Horse. The comics put out by these groups are hard to find where I live and *any* information about them is appreciated by those of us looking for an alternative to unimaginative, widely distributed comics. (Do we really need *Police Academy: The Comic*?)

My next criticism is the price. Your magazine costs one to two dollars more than most magazines. A more reasonable two or three dollar price could gain enough readers to make up for the price drop and attract advertisers if circulation were to go up.

My final criticism is that the composition of your cover is too cluttered. Large amounts of copy are scattered all over, causing overlapping of artwork. When overlapping occurs, you put the copy in blocks which ruin the composition further. Also, a majority of artwork on your covers have no background and are given monochromatic backgrounds of puke green and blaring pink. I would suggest a margin on the left side of the cover that holds almost all of the copy (such as on the cover of CS #5 with Superboy) preferably not green. With copy in this established area, you would be free to show artwork without cutting the background in the remaining cover. People judge magazines by their cover, especially comic readers. By cleaning up your cover, your magazine would look more professional.

With the above exceptions, COMICS SCENE is a refreshing look at an art form I admire. If the above changes were made, I wouldn't miss an issue.

William Watson
Address Withheld

To answer your criticisms in order: 1) We try to give everything equal time be it media, independents or the majors. And our continued survival does depend on covering what's hot along with less well known titles. 2) We're expensive because we have color. That's what makes us unique. 3) We hope our recent cover efforts have changed your mind. As always, we'll continue to try harder

...Back in issue #7, you ran an article dealing with *The Return of the Swamp Thing* movie prefaced by this introduction: "Swamp Thing returns to the screen, but have they mucked him up again?" At the time, I found the question unfair, the original *Swamp Thing* was a fairly faithful, albeit low-budget, attempt to bring an authentic comics concept to the screen. So, I was really looking forward to the sequel, believing that Michael Uslan and company would deliver the goods a second time.

It took me five months to learn that I was wrong. The movie surfaced and disappeared so quickly at a nearby theater that I never had a chance to catch it there. Unfortunately, I rented the video version this weekend and suffered through it in the privacy of my own living room. I should have saved my money, although I am glad that I didn't shell out five bucks to see this on the silver screen.

Quite frankly, the movie is one of the *worst* attempts to translate a comic book character to another medium that I have *ever* seen. The first film may have been campy, true, but it was at least *good* camp. *The Return of the Swamp Thing* was almost a farce, made even worse by the shoddy attempt to incorporate some of Alan Moore's concepts into the mix. Case in point: Heather Locklear wonders how she and her new "boy friend" can have any kind of physical relationship. By way of reply, Swamp Thing breaks off a muck-encrusted dildo and hands it to her, smiling. Give me a break, huh? And Uslan says this scene is "quite similar to the comic book"? Only on the most superficial plot level, I'm afraid.

What I find truly amazing is the plethora of talented actors and actresses who turn in terrible performances in this turkey. Heather Locklear did much better on *Dynasty*, and poor Sarah Douglas and Louis Jourdan should hang their heads in shame. The only bright spot in the film is the Swamp Thing's physical appearance. He really does look the way he should, even though Dick Durock plays him like some kind of backwoods Burt Reynolds.

To all those readers who've been whining about Tim Burton's *Batman*, instead of quibbling over such a minor point as Prince's soundtrack, you might have faced a two-hour travesty like this one.

Chris Schilg
563 Briarcliff
Alliance, OH 44601

...The Thought Balloons" section (CS #9) raised a good subject—the deaths of characters. It made me think about two deaths that brought two different reactions: Dark Phoenix in *X-Men* #136 and Guardian in *Alpha Flight* #12. I think that the death of Phoenix still has quite an impact on me, even though it later turned out not to be the real Jean Grey after all. Perhaps because the Phoenix entity gained a bit of humanity by its sacrifice, albeit briefly.

Guardian's death, on the other hand, I felt, was one of the biggest mistakes ever committed. For one reason, it was too soon in the series to wipe out *any* member, let alone the leader. Granted, Guardian had been around for a while, but we hadn't really seen the functioning of the team as a whole yet. I also felt that the choice to kill that character was only a cheap ploy to both sell books and to make John Byrne, the writer of that particular story, come across as saying, "I really don't care about this character."

When various readers wrote in saying how killing Guardian was an illogical choice, Byrne defended himself by saying "Death is not a logical thing. That is true, but couldn't it have come further down the road? In addition to occurring too soon, it was also a shocker since Guardian had won his battle. Byrne's death only brought sadness to the comic world, while Guardian's was more of a publicity stunt. The death of Robin was both a publicity stunt and a matter of lazy writing. From what I read in the letters column of *Batman* afterwards, the pre-death people seemed to make the most pinheaded remarks, like, 'I'm glad the little jerk is dead!'

I would like to know why the people who did or would have voted for Robin's death made their choice. The catch is, I would like you to explain without the use of words like "jerk, "twerp", "brat", "wimp" or any other unintelligent derogative (underline and emphasize *unintelligent*). I would like to think that most of you can talk negatively about something without resorting to petty name-calling.

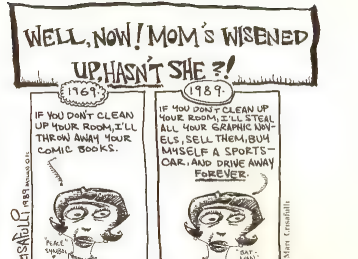
Willie Holmes
8453 S. Saginaw Avenue
Chicago, IL 60617

...This is a reply to Jon Marshall's response (CS #9) to my first letter (CS #7). I'm afraid that I haven't changed my mind. After reading his letter in CS #9, I watched the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* cartoon again, really hoping to like it. However, I turned it off when Raphael said, "Wake up and smell the pizza, dude!!"

The Turtles have grown into a national phenomenon. They are everywhere, and suffer because of it. The public's image of the Turtles has become one of fluff and merchandising. Because of incredible exposure from the cartoon, toy line and media hype (including *Mad Magazine* and ABC's *Roseanne*), no one will ever grasp what they were originally intended to be: a very pointed, insightful parody of comic books today. People have lost sight of that, or perhaps they never saw it at all. The Turtles have lost their soul. They have been reduced to toys for children and half hour commercials. Where is the dark edge? The balance between relentless pursuit of justice and insanity? The fierce loyalty and code of honor? All have been lost in this "opening up" as Jon puts it. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles have become a parody of themselves, and furthermore have no credibility or redeeming qualities.

Something very special has been lost

Craig Ingerto
South Windsor, CT


WELL, NOW! MOM'S WISENED UP, HASN'T SHE?!
1969
1989
IF YOU DON'T CLEAN UP YOUR ROOM, I'LL THROW AWAY YOUR COMIC BOOKS.
IF YOU DON'T CLEAN UP YOUR ROOM, I'LL STEAL ALL YOUR GRAPHIC NOVELS, SELL THEM, BUY MYSELF A SPORTS-CAR, AND DRIVE AWAY FOREVER.
CESARULF 1989
Art: Mark Crisdalli

...Having read "Lettering" from issue #10 of COMICS SCENE, I'm...*flabbergasted*! (for lack of better words, more "choice" words.) I won't give the name, but the person who "slayed" Michael Keaton should rethink his letter to you. First point of order. The idea that the last 15 minutes of the film were comical. If this person is such a knowledgable comic reader, they obviously would have read the comic adaptation to the movie. The gunshot, made by the joker, out of his extra-long barrel gun, was no ordinary bullet. It was a small missile, explosive in fact. So, the joker got lucky. But hey, Batman gets lucky all the time. Point of order number two: the domino toppling church pews. Again, if you have any sense, one would realize after crashing in a plane, you're not going to run out and play a football game, much less go running into a 90-story cathedral and climb the stairs to the top, just to fight three goons. In the movie novelization, it's explained that Batman broke or fractured some of his ribs. That seems very feasible to me. Heck, he wasn't in the cockpit of the plane after the crash. Maybe he was thrown from the cockpit upon impact? This just reflects more to the fact that Batman isn't indestructible, just lucky. Sure, he's well built, but he's no Superman. See *Batman* issue #429, when Batman hits Superman. Need I say more? Well, enough of beating that dead horse. I would like to give Michael Keaton a well-deserved round of applause. He made the movie for me. Sure, Jack Nicholson was good, but Keaton deserves more credit. Hopefully, in the next movie, Keaton will get more screen time.

Mark S. Cummings
41701 Park Avenue
Hemet, CA 92344

Barr

(continued from page 18)

In addition to *The Maze Agency* #9, Barr says he has a number of other comics stories that he is quite proud of. "I had a real good time with *Camelot 3000* [which he discussed in the original COMICS SCENE #6, 1982]; that was one of the first series to test the direct market. I'm proud of the re-creations of some of the Silver Age stories that I liked a lot when I was a kid. In *Brave and Bold* #190, I wrote a Batman/Adam Strange crossover, drawn by Carmine Infantino, and that was really a thrill. A few years later, I wrote an issue of *The Flash* drawn by Carmine, and that was great because it was Barry Allen, the 'real' Flash! And there was the Fantastic Four story I did recently in *Marvel Fanfare*. I realized after writing a few issues of *The Maze Agency* that to some extent, what I'm doing is creating my own Silver Age comic book—it features attractive, likable characters whose stories exist in a fairly benevolent universe. That's the kind of story I like to read and like to write!"

There are several other projects in the works for Barr. He is planning to write the latest revival of a line of characters from the '60s. And he'll be involved with the new line of comic books from TSR. "It looks as though I'm going to be writing a comic book called *Agent 13*, which is based on a series of novels. These are very pulp-oriented novels set back in the '30s, and we're going to be bringing the concept into the 1990s. Basically, it's the struggle of a renegade agent of an evil organization, and his attempts to defeat that organization."

One of his upcoming short stories is also one of his most important. Barr is doing a story for Eclipse's *Real War Stories* #2, drawn by Mark Badger, that is about his father.

"It's a very personal story. My father died of a service-connected injury which he contracted in World War II, and he died a few months after I was born, so I never knew him. It deals with personal conflicts on my end in trying to cope with this, and also the fact that the military can get away with this—soldiers can contract fatal illnesses, and due to certain government stipulations, there's nothing they can do about it. I got a lot of government files that my mother and I didn't even know existed about my father's illness. They were fascinating."

Says Mike Barr, reflecting on his writing, "I've been pretty fortunate in my career to both make a pretty good living *and* have a lot of personal satisfaction!"

Annie

(continued from page 44)

ing to plug the leak.

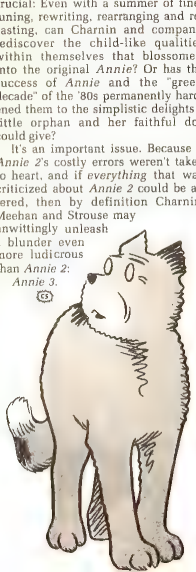
But too much water damage had already been sustained, despite Charnin's best efforts at 12th-hour resuscitation. On January 15, after hours of deliberation, the producers pulled the plug on *Annie 2*, ending its run after 36 performances.

Rumors instantly began circulating through the entertainment community: *Annie 2* would be revised at the Goodspeed Opera House (*Annie*'s original home) over the summer in time for a fall Broadway opening; the original *Annie* would open in place of *Annie 2* at the latter's reserved Broadway venue, the Marriott Marquis Theater; the whole *Annie 2* cast would participate in the *Annie* revival.

The most immediate whispers fell first. Loudon extricated herself from any *Annie*, 1 or 2. *Annie* would *not* be performed on Broadway. The question of a Goodspeed *Annie 2* revival is unanswered but unlikely.

One question *not* asked remains crucial: Even with a summer of fine-tuning, rewriting, rearranging and recasting, can Charnin and company rediscover the child-like qualities within themselves that blossomed into the original *Annie*? Or has the success of *Annie* and the "greed decade" of the '80s permanently hardened them to the simplistic delights a little orphan and her faithful dog could give?

It's an important issue. Because if *Annie 2*'s costly errors weren't taken to heart, and if *everything* that was criticized about *Annie 2* could be altered, then by definition Charnin, Meehan and Strouse may unwittingly unleash a blunder even more ludicrous than *Annie 2*: *Annie 3*.



Baker Street

(continued from page 31)

"Every group goes through it. You had the greasers in the '50s, the hippies in the '60s and the punks or the new wavers in the '70s. We never saw such a predominant group in the '80s because the so-called Yuppies still control society. So, those values aren't being passed on. The age gap of what's considered young now extends from 18 to 40. They're all interested in the same things. You see 40-year-olds playing video games. You don't have the mental aging that you had in previous generations."

"The reason I wanted to do *Baker Street* from 'day-go' was to do a book about punks that wasn't 'Oh, here comes this group of punks to beat up an old lady and here comes Spider-Man to stop them,' because that's how comics are with punks. They're really misinterpreted in society. Everybody thinks if you're a punk, you're a skinhead and a Nazi and that they're the same thing. But we have nothing to do with that," Davis reflects.

Numerous surprises await readers in upcoming issues, the co-creators promise, as well as answers to questions such as how and why Sharon got into the punk scene, why she's called Harlequin, what went on in her life between the time that she left Scotland Yard and then turned up, with her sidekick Sam, helping Pinner solve a mystery. This period will also let us see into Sam's past.

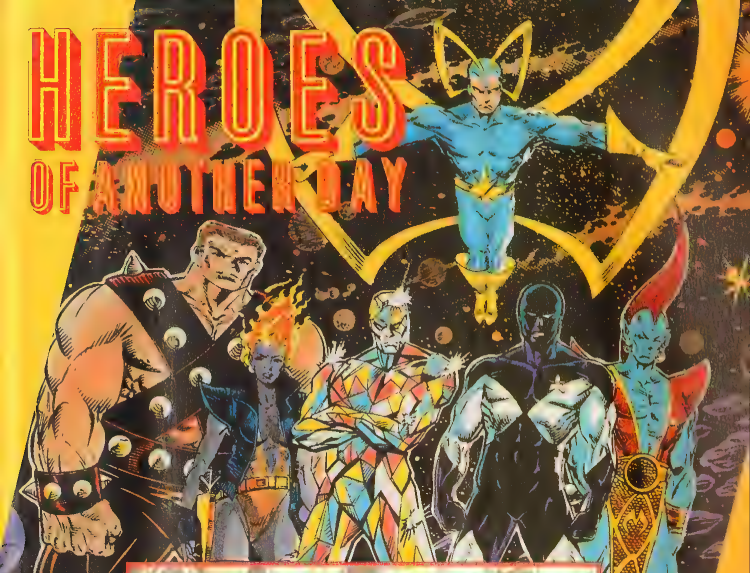
Sharon will eventually become caught up in "The Ripper Mystery" and Sue's role will be expanded to doing more than what Reed calls "just sitting around going, 'What's this mean?' "

Both Gary Reed and Guy Davis have other projects in mind. Reed will be writing a comic adaptation of the Palladium role-playing game *The Mechanoids*, a supplement to the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* role-playing game and an "as-yet untitled war story of the Chosin Reservoir."

"I won't be doing *Baker Street* all my life," says Davis. "I have planned a 'Final Problem,' and it may end around issue #14 or 15, just to give me a break so I can do something else. But I would like to come back again and do a set of limited series.

"We have quite a few surprises lined up," Guy Davis sums up with a deep breath. "I think people will really be shocked when they happen. And we want people to know these surprises have been plotted since the beginning. They aren't something we decided to throw in at the last minute. Hopefully, everyone will just enjoy them."

HEROES OF ANOTHER DAY



Writer/artist Jim Valentino has seen Marvel's future. He knows what awaits the "Guardians of the Galaxy."

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

The idea is that you *don't* go for the obvious—everybody's 1,000-year descendant or whatever," says writer/artist Jim Valentino of his latest project, a revitalization of Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy*. "Instead, you look for new twists and new turns to utilize the characters. We *won't* be seeing Peter Parker's great-great-great-great-grandson or an Iron Man 3017. Instead, there's an entire planet in the first four issues called the Stark. Their whole culture—technology, religion, everything—is based on Tony Stark's armor and circuitry. There's a whole *planet* of Iron Men that the Guardians have to deal with. That's what I mean by doing things with a different vision."

The Guardians first appeared more than 20 years ago in an issue of *Marvel Super-Heroes*, but they languished in comic-book limbo until they resurfaced in an early issue of *Marvel Two-in-One*. Shortly thereafter, they launched into an epic adventure with the Defenders, in which they finally defeated their hated enemies, the conquering Badoon, and were then given a several-issue run in *Marvel Presents*. That series, featuring their bizarre voyages through the universe, failed to guarantee them a permanent title, and the Guardians found themselves relegated to guest shots in titles like *The Avengers*, *Marvel Team-Up* and, once again, *Marvel Two-in-One*. It was in the 69th issue of the title that brought them back that they made their final appearance...until Valentino decided

Charlie-27, Nikki, Martinex, Starhawk, Vance Astro and Yondu are back! Going to make something of it?

All Guardians Art Jim Valentino

to ease them out of "retirement."

Valentino, the creator of *normalman*, says the idea to revive the space-spanning heroes of the future was his, one he brought to Marvel at a felicitous moment: "I had been doing some work for Marvel off and on, *What If?*, *Silver Surfer*, fill-ins and odds and ends here and there, both writing and drawing. Marvel was getting pretty familiar with me," he explains. "I was thinking about a series, trying to figure out who to do. Chris Claremont's not going to give up the *X-Men*, so I thought the best idea might be to create something or update something on my own. I was thinking about the Guardians of the Galaxy. I always liked them, visually, and I took about six months to come up with an angle.

"One day, it just hit me out of the blue. There's an angle nobody's thought of for a future group: explore the universe—the Marvel Universe—then, inhabit 1,000 years hence; who survived, who didn't, what happened to them," Valentino reveals. "The Marvel Universe, being populated with all these omnipotent and semi-omnipotent characters, has got a wealth of material waiting to be pounced on. Coincidentally, the thing that really kicked it off was that my editor, Craig Anderson, was thinking about an idea of his own called *Marvel 3000*, in which he wanted to do basically the same thing, and [Executive Editor] Tom DeFalco was thinking about the Guardians of the Galaxy, although he wanted to jump them ahead 1,500 years to see what would happen if you turned them into an Alien Legion sort of group. It was perfect timing on my part."

But who *are* the Guardians of the Galaxy? Valentino says they're essentially the team created all those years ago—a group of outcasts and loners, separated from the rest of civilization for a variety of reasons. Some are the last of their kind; one is a man out of time; and others have an awareness that makes them different.

Will Nikki be incinerated by the Stark? Or will she survive this issue to face another of the two years' worth of cliffhangers Jim Valentino has in mind?

Even in the far future, crossovers are still possible, thanks to cosmic characters like the frenetic Firelord.

"The Guardians are the same characters as before: the original four, Vance Astro, Charlie-27, Martinex and Yondu, plus Starhawk. Nikki and Aleta," he says. "Aleta will become a functional member of the group; she and Starhawk have been sharing this symbiotic relationship, but as of issue #3 that will be no more: They're having a very nasty 'divorce.' At least, it's nasty on Aleta's side; Starhawk doesn't seem to care.

"They're all fairly well-rounded characters; they're *not* your typical two-dimensional figures on paper," Valentino notes. "They each have different traits that make them unique as a group. Similar to Chris' mutants, they're each pretty much on their own. They have nobody else to turn to, being last survivors and outcasts. Beyond that, they each have a unique personality: Vance Astro is a pretty tormented guy—an idealist who, over a period of time, became a cynic. I've seen that in people who were politically active in their youths, but just gave up the ghost when they got older. Yet, he still maintains a bit of that idealism. Charlie-27, as another example, is a military man without a military to be a part of."

Valentino begins his new version of the Guardians with a classic theme—the quest. This time, the Holy Grail is Captain America's shield, which has survived more than 1,000 years to the Guardians' time even if the living legend of World War II has not. It seems a myth has grown around the missing shield itself, suggesting that it will make its bearer invincible. In the course of this search, the Guardians will meet some

new characters—and some old favorites.

"In the fifth and sixth issues, they'll battle a new group called Force, one of whose members will be discovered to be of the same race as one of the Guardians," Valentino reports. "That Guardian will find out he's *not* the last of his race, as he thought. There's another survivor—and she's real nasty!" Among the established Marvel characters slated to make appearances in *Guardians of the Galaxy* are Firelord, the Silver Surfer, Galactus, the Watcher, the Shi'ar and the Imperial Guard and Dr. Strange. "*Guardians of the Galaxy* is *Star Trek* with superheroes," Valentino chuckles.

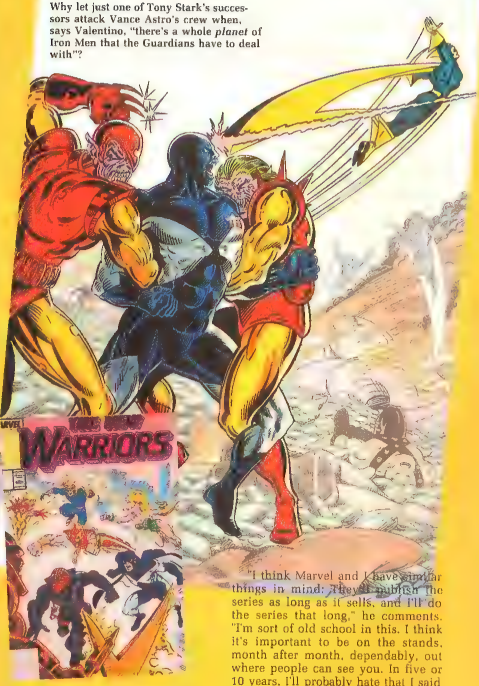
One of Valentino's goals is to come up with new villains for his septet of spacegoers. "We're trying to build up a rogue's gallery for the Guardians, beyond the Badoon. How can I say this without disparaging anyone?" he muses. "One of the problems with the Guardians in the first stories is that they only had *one* adversary. We're trying to create a bunch of different people for them to fight. In the first series, once they had gotten rid of the Badoon, they just stood around and said, 'OK, what do we do now?' Issue after issue, we will introduce new concepts, new characters, new villains—and many of the villains will be recurring."

An example is the female villain named Malevolence, who will be introduced in issue #7. "That issue will be split in half," Valentino says. "Half of it will tell why Starhawk is 'One Who Knows.' The answer's a little different from what you might expect. He doesn't have cosmic awareness; he seems to have some kind of clairvoyance. In the other half, this Malevolence character keeps asking them about a child—and they have no idea what she's talking about! In the second year, we'll actually meet that child, Protege, and his power is the ability to learn how to do anything. He's just a kid, but when he becomes an adult, he could become the most powerful being in the universe.

"I found the Guardians visually interesting and the outcast angle and the outer space angle worthwhile," he confesses. "There's a lot of room to move, for different kinds of stories. I like the idea of group dynamics. I lean toward groups in comics and always have. I've been a big fan of the Legion, the Avengers. I think group *gestalt* tends to work best in a comic-book situation."

That sounds like Valentino is committed to this series, willing to give it time to grow and expand. Just how long does he see his stay on *Guardians of the Galaxy*? He answers that question by explaining how he presented the idea to Marvel's editors. "When I gave Marvel the proposal, I broke it into several sections. The first was just an explanation, a teaser, of the concept. Then, I did a *two-year* plot synopsis, just like the one-sentence summaries you get in the Marvel Checklists. And I've been pretty much following that. So, I've got a one-sentence idea for each issue to jump off from—two years' worth of stories before I have to start thinking hard about fresh ideas.

Why let just one of Tony Stark's successors attack Vance Astro's crew when, says Valentino, "there's a whole *planet* of Iron Men that the Guardians have to deal with"?



Follow the adventures of Vance Astro when he was a boy (Marvel Boy, that is) when he teams up with Firestar, Speedball, Kid Nova, Night Thrasher and Namorita to form *The New Warriors*.

"I think Marvel and I have similar things in mind: They'll publish the series as long as it sells, and I'll do the series that long," he comments. "I'm sort of old school in this. I think it's important to be on the stands, month after month, dependably, out where people can see you. In five or 10 years, I'll probably hate that I said that, but the biggest successes come from that. I think there's a point where you approach burnout. That's it. I'll stay with the Guardians until I don't feel I can give them any more. But right now, I don't see anything else I would rather be doing."

Stories set in the future tend to both confuse and turn off potential readers. One, they're not a part of the ongoing continuity of the publisher's "universe," and two, if they are, they seem to indicate that the world's destiny is set in stone. Valentino believes his use of concepts such as the Stark and Marvel's more cosmic characters handles the first objection. And Marvel's treatment of

(continued on page 67)

All Guardians & New Warriors Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1990 Marvel Entertainment Group

Natasha Bullink or From Pottsylvania With Love

By KYLE COUNTS

Accent in place, Sally Kellerman brings a slinky superspy to life in "Boris & Natasha."

Jay Ward would have approved. June Foray certainly does. And when *Boris & Natasha* opens this month, audiences will hopefully give their thumbs up to Sally Kellerman's portrayal of Natasha Fatale, the Pottsylvanian superspy from Ward's classic TV series *Rocky and His Friends*, which ran from 1959 to 1961 on ABC. (Beginning in September 1961, Bullwinkle had his own show, simply called *The Bullwinkle Show*. It had a 12-year run, three of them on NBC and the remaining nine on ABC.)

In the live-action comedy-adventure film, directed by Charles Martin Smith (who acted in *Never Cry Wolf* and *The Untouchables* and directed *Trick or Treat*), Kellerman is teamed with *SCTV* alumnus Dave Thomas, who plays Natasha's partner in international crime, Boris Badenov. Screenwriter/associate producer Charles Fradin's story (co-written by Brad Hall) follows the crack spy team from the mythological country of Pottsylvania to the United States as they search for a Pottsylvanian scientist (Paxton Whitehead in a dual role) who has invented a microchip that can reverse time. Their mission takes them, as publicity materials describe it, "from the bowels of Istanbul to the historic granite face of Mt. Rushmore's Abe Lincoln, where they discover a secret laboratory in Lincoln's nose."

It was Fradin, a "big" Jay Ward fan and admirer of Ward's Rocky and Bullwinkle in particular, who came up with the idea of bringing Boris and Natasha to the wide screen. And it was Kellerman's voice, which he describes as "a cross between Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo," that was his inspiration.

"Charlie approached [Jonathan Krane, Kellerman's husband and Fradin's manager] one day and said, 'Wouldn't Sally make a great Natasha?' " recalls Kellerman of the project's origin. "I was not aware of the Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons; I had probably seen them once or twice years ago, but I never paid much attention to them. Jonathan thought it was a brilliant idea, and that's how *Boris & Natasha* began—from a 30-second conversation to a movie that was three years in the making."

It took Krane approximately a year to secure the rights to the cartoon [Ward, who died in 1989, participated in all negotiations, but had no creative involvement), at which time Krane began the script's development. He spent more than two years turning out some 20 drafts of the screenplay, ultimately soliciting comedy writers Linda Favilla and Anson Downes to give the final version a polish. The end result is a fish-out-of-water comedy that strives to retain the humor and hipness of the original cartoons.

Getting a fix on Natasha wasn't easy for Kellerman, who for background waded through a long-winded Russian movie ("three-quarters of it was horses galloping, and the lead actress only spoke three words in the whole picture") and a sampling of Polish mood music, not to mention watching hours of *Rocky and His Friends* cartoons. "I spent a couple of days looking at about 100 Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons at the Museum of Broadcasting in New York, and the more I watched, I realized how little screen time Boris and Natasha actu-

Boris & Natasha Photos: Larry Sebastian© copyright 1990 MGM, Inc.

Sally Kellerman blossoms as the former Miss Transylvania, Natasha Fatale.

Natasha & Bullwinkle Characters: Copyright 1990 Jay Ward Productions

Commie creeps or misunderstood spies? Kellerman admits that without the hindrance of Moose and Squirrel, audiences will get to know Natasha and Boris (Dave Thomas).

"Dave is not as short as Boris, and my hair is not as long as Natasha's, but I think we captured the feeling," says Kellerman.

ally had," the actress says. "They would appear just long enough to say [in accent], 'Moose and Squirrel went that way,' and they would be off again. The challenge came in trying to figure out who they are when no one's looking, when they're *not* chasing Moose and Squirrel.

"I had the fortunate opportunity to meet with June Foray [who voiced the original Natasha, and has a bit part in *Boris & Natasha* as an autograph hound, see page 58]. She made a tape of herself speaking in Natasha's voice. I asked her, 'What were they [Boris and Natasha] like? What did they care about?' All she said was, 'Get Moose and Squirrel.' The other thing she told me was that Natasha loved Boris so much, thought he was the greatest thing on Earth. So, those were the two things I started with, plus the feel of the cartoon. But it was trying to figure out who these characters are that was the real backbreaker."

A mock biography of Natasha, sold at the Dudley Do-Right Emporium on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, notes that the feminine counterpart to Boris is "the only child of Axis Sally and Count Dracula" who, in her teens, became an apprentice witch until she flunked out of flight school. It goes on to say that her association with Boris began in 1948, "when they were both booked for hurling rocks at Girl Scout Cookie-sellers. A former Miss Transylvania...Natasha raises tarantulas and is active in civic affairs, being national chairman of the Society to Restore the Real Meaning of Halloween."

During her 45 minutes with Kellerman, June Foray stayed largely in character. "I talked to Sally as Natasha," says the vocal stylist, "so that she could get the flavor of the conversational part of the character, as well as the accent—Natasha, for instance, would say, 'dollink,' not 'darling.' After all, Boris and Natasha came from Pottsylvania, not Russia. Jay wanted to be absolutely certain that they were not Soviet spies, because the Russians were sensitive about that."

The story of *Boris & Natasha* opens in Pottsylvania as Boris and Natasha's boss, Fearless Leader (Christopher Neame), is giving them orders to pose as defectors to the United States so that they can track down Professor Anton Pavlovitch and get their hands on his revolutionary time-reversal invention. In the States, they get mixed up with a fellow spy (John Candy), a shifty CIA chief (Alex Rocco), a Pottsylvanian double-agent (Larry Cedar) and their all-American next-door neighbors, Toots and Harve (Andrea Martin and John Calvin).

As Jay Ward would not give permission to the filmmakers to use Rocky and Bullwinkle in *Boris & Natasha*, how, then, does the script get around explaining their absence? "Well, you don't know that we do or don't," Kellerman adds, ever so enticingly. "[Breaking into her Natasha accent] You will have to come see movie to see how we deal with Moose and Squirrel." The film's production notes hint that the characters of Toots and Harve "in some strange way are reminiscent of Rocky and Bullwinkle," but Kellerman remains tight-lipped when

(continued on page 68)

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE SQUIRREL

That vocal virtuoso, June Foray, also breathes life into Granny, Witch Hazel and Natasha Fatale.

All Bullwinkle Characters & Art Copyright 1961, 1988 by Weld Productions Photo Courtesy June Foray

By MICHAEL MALLORY

The scene: The set of *Boris & Natasha*. The action: A tiny, petite woman rushes up to a tall, leggy lady and asks for her autograph. "I just feel we have something in common!" she says in a familiar sounding Brooklyn twang. They *do* have something in common. The tall woman is Sally Kellerman, who is playing Pottsylvanian spy Natasha Fatale (see page 56) and the small woman is the actress who first gave the character life, June Foray.

Though this gag cameo role is June Foray's first on-camera appearance in many years, she has never been out of the public eye or ear. Her professional credits run pages—even she has forgotten some of them—but the role she is perhaps most identified with is that of the heroic Rocket J. Squirrel.

Today, this gracious and gregarious lady is as busy as ever with *three* Saturday morning cartoon shows currently running ("I don't have to worry about where my next meal is coming from," she jokes). It would take a volume to record all of her civic, political and industry-related activities. Among the organizations that can list her as a board member is the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

It was at around age six that June Foray first discovered a talent for performing, but the road to becoming a professional actress was literally quite painful. "My mother gave me dancing lessons, and I was fortunate enough to get pneumonia. I would be an over-the-hill dancer by this time!" Foray laughs.

"Then, she gave me piano lessons and I broke my finger playing baseball with my brother, and I didn't have to practice anymore." Persuading her mother to invest in acting lessons, Foray debuted as a radio actress in her native Springfield, Massachusetts, at age 12. She was frequently called upon even at that age to portray old ladies or *grand dames*, good training for what was to come.

Hurt by the Depression, her family moved to California shortly before World War II, where she continued to work in radio. "I created a character called Lady Makebelieve and I was on the shows and acted in them, and I got $7.50 for all three of them.' At this time, she was all of 15.

During the war years, Foray wrote dramas for the Office of Civilian Defense, and made the transition from local radio in Los Angeles to the networks.

Though she has worked on stage,

The Frostbite Falls Follies players pose for those two notorious Moon men (& photographers), Clloyd and Gidney.

Photo: ABC Photofest

film and television as well, the petite actress admits that her size resulted in casting problems. "I'm only 4-foot-11, and so I wasn't very commanding," she says. "I wanted to go to New York and be on the stage, but any time I did stage work, it was always character, never a leading lady." In radio, the theater of the mind, though, an actor's height didn't matter, and it was there that Foray first discovered and then developed her ability to create complete characters with her voice only.

Some of the happiest times in June Foray's life were shared with creator Jay Ward (left) and writer Bill Scott, the voice of Bullwinkle.

Photo: Courtesy June Foray

Foray's entry into animation came in a somewhat roundabout way. "Alan Livingston [of Capitol Records] said, 'Look, we're starting a children's department,' " she explains. "This was before Disney and Warners had developed record companies of their own. So, we did all of their shorts, we did all of the animated features at Disney, and here I was playing *Alice in Wonderland* and *Lady and the Tramp* and doing all the female voices. And Walt Disney said, 'My lord, that girl should be working over here!' "

Her first voice-over role at Disney, that of Lucifer the cat in *Cinderella*, required no dialogue, only mewing.

Relying less on animated antics, Rocky and Bullwinkle stayed on track with what Foray calls mordant and brilliant humor.

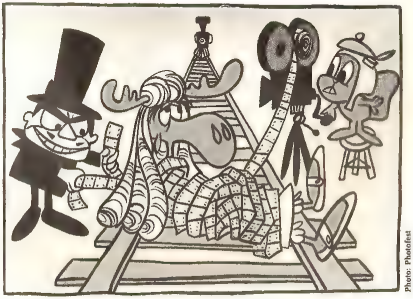


Photo: Photofest

Foray continued to work in both Disney shorts and features, though, and in *Peter Pan*, for example, she can be heard as an Indian squaw and a mermaid. For the latter role, she was rotoscoped as well—filmed in the action of the character for the animators' benefit.

With her career now snowballing, June Foray branched out into commercial voice-overs and jingles, comedy albums like *St. George & the Dragonet* with her Capitol Records cohorts Stan Freberg and Daws Butler (STARLOG #116) and replacements, looping dialogue in movies and TV for other actresses. In the early 1950s, she appeared regularly on *Carson's Cellar*, a program featuring a young comic named Johnny Carson.

A 1952 Disney short, "Trick or Treat," featured Foray as the cackling Witch Hazel. Hazel may have been a real witch, but she had at least one secret admirer: Warners director

Chuck Jones. "Chuck *loved* the Witch Hazel character," she says, "so in 1954, he called my agent and I did Witch Hazel over at Warners, too, you know, with all the flying hairpins and a pet tarantula, Paul. It was just a little different at Warners where Witch Hazel was more American. Chuck named her Witch Hazel too and Disney was unable to sue because witch hazel had been copyrighted by some alcohol company. They couldn't do anything about it."

At Warners, Foray became the chief female voice artist, inheriting the role of Granny from Bea Benaderet, voicing Alice in the *Honeymouser* cartoons, and providing incidental voices—all *without* screen credit. The late Mel Blanc's original contract with the studio stipulated sole credit for voice characterizations, despite the work of Foray, Benaderet, Freberg, Butler, Julie Bennett and Arthur Q. "Elmer Fudd" Bryan. Was the credit issue a sore spot?

"It kind of was," Foray answers. "The voice is equally important in animation as the drawings. Where would Bugs Bunny be without Mel Blanc's voice? It really distresses me that poor Arthur Q. never got the credit. He was the one who started *dis funny widdle voice* [Bryan died in 1959 and was succeeded in the role by Blanc and Hal Smith]. Walter Lantz—who is a dear, dear man—was the first one to give actors credit."

The credit issue aside, Foray got on well with Blanc (STARLOG #102). "We always had a very nice relationship. He was a very talented man. I asked him once if he would ever retire and he said, 'Hell, no!' He not only died with his boots on but with his microphone on. Just think of the legacy he left."

Not being under contract to either Disney or Warners meant Foray could freelance at other studios as well. At MGM, she worked with the legendary Tex Avery, whose cartoons were renowned for their riotous insanity. The man himself, however, was quite different, as Foray remembers: "He was a very quiet man, very introspective. I think most comedians are really like that, and he *was* an actor on paper, after all. He had a great deal of depth, but was very subdued, particularly in later years."

In 1958, a call from out of the blue signalled the start of what Foray calls the happiest professional relationship of her career. "My agent called and said, 'Have you heard of a fellow named Jay Ward?' I hadn't, and my agent said, 'He wants to take you to lunch and he has a great idea.' We met at the Tail O' the Cock and had a couple of martinis before lunch, which I *never* do, and boy, the idea of a moose and a squirrel sounded swell!" she laughs.

The original idea behind Rocky & Bullwinkle, says the actress, was a program to be called *Frostbite Falls Follies*, which would feature a variety of animated animals. "I guess Jay just decided on the moose and squirrel because they were so different," she says.

"Jay never voice-tested people. He was a very perceptive man, and he knew precisely whom he wanted and what he wanted from them. And we never saw any of the characters. Jay said, 'June, you'll be doing the little boy squirrel. I want an all-American kid, the Boy Scout of squirreldom.' "

For his comic villains, Ward wanted socially contemporary characters but tried not to exploit Cold War sensibilities. "He said, 'Natasha and Boris are *not* supposed to be Russian, they're from Pottsylvania,' " Foray recalls. "He made that absolutely clear to us. Of course, the inference was there, and naturally, Russia has taken offense at that. But we offended *everybody*!"

The original cast included Foray, Paul Frees, who provided the proper Pottsylvanian accent as Boris Badenov, and the show's creative godfather, Bill Scott, who contributed scripts as well as the voice of Bullwinkle J. Moose. As new characters were added, the cast enlarged to include Daws Butler, radio actor Walter Tetley and film performers Hans Conreid, Charlie Ruggles, Edward Everett Horton and William Conrad. It is a particular point of sadness for Foray that, with the exception of Conrad, the cast members of the Rocky show are gone.

But in 1958, the soon-to-be-classic series was just another hopeful pilot. The first episodes were animated outside of the United States with less than sterling results. "You can see how crude the first ones are, even the voices," she comments. "On a couple of them, there was something wrong with the soundtrack. Rocky was [basso] *way down here* and Bullwinkle was *WAY DOWN HERE*. The first few were not that good, but the idea and the writing caught on, and that was that."

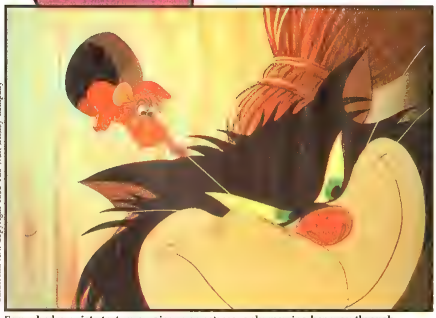
It was the writing, Foray feels, that made the show: "Bill Scott was a brilliant writer, and Jay had other writers

Photo: Courtesy June Foray

June Foray shares the stage with animation legends from Warners—(left to right) Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng—and Disney's Art Babbitt.

"The voice is equally important in animation as the drawings," declares Foray who received no credit at Warners for her efforts as Witch Hazel and Granny.

Granny, Witch Hazel Characters: Copyright 1990 Warner Bros.



Cinderella Art: Copyright 1950 The Walt Disney Company

Foray had a quiet start as a voice-over actress, only mewing her way through *Cinderella* as Lucifer the cat.

[Allan Burns, Chris Hayward, Chris Jenkins] who went on to do *Mary Tyler Moore*, *Barney Miller*, *Mork & Mindy* and *The Jeffersons*. They were all very fine and that's why the satire is there and the humor is so mordant and brilliant. There was nothing, no line that was unnecessary."

After the first few episodes, which were burdened with a distractive laugh track, the animation was brought back to Hollywood and the program began hitting its stride. For the cast, the evening recording sessions were something to cherish.

"It was like having a festival every time we recorded," the actress recalls. "It was so rewarding, and not only intellectually, which it was; it was like going to a party and having fun without putting a lampshade on your head. We told jokes and we grew up together. It was so unique and so wonderful, and everybody loved each other."

Unlike the normal cartoon method of recording each line at a time, the entire *Rocky & Bullwinkle* scripts would be read start to finish, like a radio drama. June Foray considers the approach essential, given the scripts' nature, even though it meant actors having conversations with themselves. "The writing was so great that the timing and the reciprocity of the lines between one character and another, they *had* to build on each other. The delivery was so rapid-fire that Daws Butler and I used different color pens because we would do so many different characters. Rocky and Natasha talked to each other so much, and in the same breath, that I made Natasha red and Rocky was in pencil or pen. Bill Scott used to laugh at me, but he wrote a lot of the scripts so he knew what was coming up!"

After a five-year run, Rocket J. Squirrel and Bullwinkle J. Moose (the "Js" incidentally stand for Jay Ward) retired to the land of reruns, though Foray's talents were utilized in other Ward productions, such as *George of the Jungle*. But the influence of Rocky on the actress continues to this day, as evidenced by the silver Rocky pendant she wears around her neck. Foray remained close with Jay Ward (who died in 1989, "the end of an era," she says) as she was with Bill Scott (who died in 1985), even acting on occasion as liaison between the reclusive Ward and the rest of Hollywood. She's delighted that the original cartoons are scheduled to be released on video with enhanced color. But to the question of ever making a new Rocky series, she says simply: "You can't go home again."

One of Foray's most effective performances of the '60s was again uncredited, but many TV viewers have gone to bed with the lights on because of Talky Tina, the murderous talking doll in the "Living

All Roger Rabbit Art: Copyright 1988 The Walt Disney Company & Amblin Entertainment

Since the adventures of Roger Rabbit predated those of Moose and Squirrel, Foray made her presence known in that milestone as Wheezy, the weasel who laughed himself to death.

Another of her *Roger Rabbit* roles, as Lena Hyena, had Foray chasing after Bob Hoskins. The actress would have liked nabbing him to play Boris in the new film.

Doll" episode of *The Twilight Zone*.

"Ah yes, Talky Tina," she says with a slight smile, just before launching into *that voice*: "You *better* be nice to me; I'm going to *kill you*!" How does one go from being America's favorite Boy Scout rodent to a devil doll? "I had done the original Chatty Cathy doll for Mattel," she answers. "I should have gotten credit for Talky Tina because I wasn't replacing anybody." (For a later *Twilight Zone* episode, Foray replaced the voice of child actress Mary Badham.)

But the fact that the personable June Foray, sitting over coffee, can still raise the hair on a writer's neck simply by doing the doll voice raises an important but often overlooked aspect of voice-over acting, namely that the operative word is *acting*.

"I taught voice-overs at USC for seven years," she says, "and many students came to me and had a fantastic range of voices, but you get copy in front of them and they are not actors, they are not performers. There was no sensitivity."

Still doing the occasional on-camera role (she appeared repeatedly on *The Red Skelton Show*), the experience of a guest shot on *Green Acres* finally made her decide to drop that facet of her career. "I realized that I would be wasting half a day just sitting there, waiting for my scene to come up," she says. "Then, I had to memorize lines, which I wasn't used to anymore, and I had to go to wardrobe fittings, and be on the set at 6:00 a.m. for makeup. And I said to my agent: 'That's it! I don't want to do any on-camera things anymore!' "

The actress admits that she didn't know much about animation when she entered the field, but in the years since, June Foray has become a knowledgeable and dedicated representative of the industry, having served for six years as president of the International Animated Film Society (ASIFA).

Many prime examples of animation art adorn the walls of the home Foray shared with her late husband, writer/producer Hobart Donavan, along with drawings done specially for her by Chuck Jones, Ward Kimball and Otto Messmer.

Having worked with most of the greats of the industry, what does she feel about the current state of animation? Unlike many, June Foray has a kind word for television's dialogue-heavy limited animation: "You need the extra dialogue, when you're looking at it on a small screen, to carry along the storyline. Many of them have so many storylines, whereas some of the theatrical shorts were just funny incidents that were put together. I think in the theaters the visual effects were much funnier, but it didn't need the dialogue that Saturday morning kid's television needs."

Something she has a few *un*kind words for, however, is the practice of censoring the "violence" out of classic cartoons. "To me, that's sacrilegious. It truly is!" she exclaims. "If Bugs Bunny were tarred and feathered, he would be up and running in the next frame, just as healthy and spirited as ever. Don't tell me that kids don't watch these detective shows where they cut people's throats and you see the blood and car crashes and guns!"

Foray didn't get the chance to display her classic character voices in 1988's animation extravaganza *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* since the picture was set in 1947, several years before she entered the field, but her voice was still heard as Wheezy Weasel and Lena Hyena. As to the proposed sequel, the actress isn't convinced it's a good idea: "Once you have a classic

(continued on page 68)

A CERTAIN GRIM HUMOR

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

Grim Natwick danced with Betty Boop, sang with Snow White and even helped clear Roger Rabbit.

The history of Grim Natwick is the history of American animation. Although his name may not be as well known to the public as Walt Disney or Chuck Jones, many of his fellow animators consider him to be the greatest fine artist in their field. In fact, some consider him to be the greatest animator who has ever lived.

Strong words, perhaps, but Natwick just might have the credentials to back them up.

In addition to animating Betty Boop, Natwick was also in charge of animating the character Snow White for the classic Disney feature. A list of his employers and co-workers reads like a history of American animation: Dave & Max Fleischer, John Terry (who was later responsible with brother Paul for Terrytoons), Ub Iwerks, Walt Disney, Chuck Jones, Walter Lantz and many more. Natwick has animated characters ranging from Krazy Kat and Mickey Mouse to Woody Woodpecker and Mr. Magoo.

He helped to perfect modern animation and aided Richard Williams in preparing animators for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. Now, in between teaching, lecturing and painting, Natwick is spending much of this year promoting his new limited edition Betty Boop lithographs, being exhibited at Circle Galleries across America.

And most amazing of all is that this August, Grim Natwick will celebrate his 100th birthday.

Natwick speaks with energy and enthusiasm that belie his age, however, especially when he discusses his craft. As he sits in the Chicago Circle Gallery, surrounded by framed reproductions of classic animation, he explains that the artwork so treasured today was considered highly disposable when they were first created.

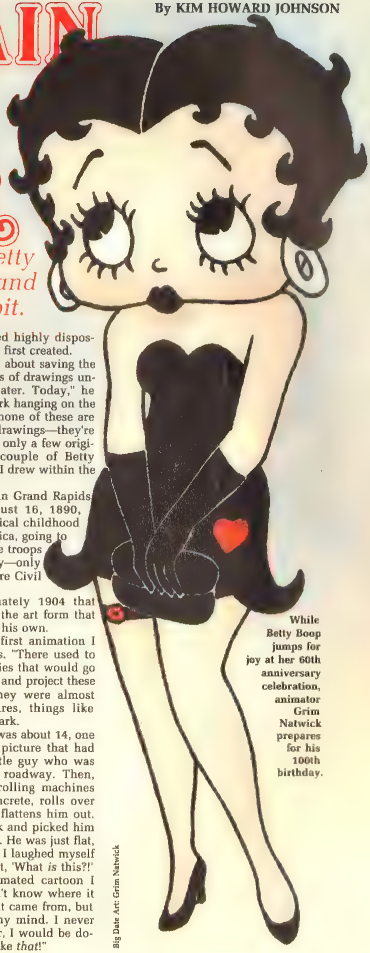
"Nobody bothered about saving the millions and millions of drawings until 40 or 50 years later. Today," he gestures at the artwork hanging on the walls around him, "none of these are original animation drawings—they're all *copies*. There are only a few originals; they have a couple of Betty Boops out there that I drew within the last year or so."

Born and raised in Grand Rapids Wisconsin on August 16, 1890, Natwick spent a typical childhood in small-town America, going to parades to watch the troops of veterans march by—only in his case, they were Civil War veterans!

It was approximately 1904 that Natwick discovered the art form that he would later make his own.

"I remember the first animation I ever saw," he recalls. "There used to be traveling companies that would go through small towns and project these motion pictures. They were almost always travel pictures, things like Yosemite National Park.

"One day when I was about 14, one company showed a picture that had been drawn of a little guy who was prancing down the roadway. Then, one of these huge rolling machines that flattens out concrete, rolls over him, it goes by and flattens him out. Somebody came back and picked him up and wriggled him. He was just flat, like a little rug—and I laughed myself sick at that! I thought, 'What *is* this?!' It was the first animated cartoon I had ever seen. I don't know where it was made or where it came from, but it always stuck in my mind. I never knew that years later, I would be doing little characters like *that*!"



While Betty Boop jumps for joy at her 60th anniversary celebration, animator Grim Natwick prepares for his 100th birthday.

Big Date Art: Grim Natwick

Bugs Bunny, Sylvester Characters: Copyright 1988 Warner Bros.

Roger Rabbit Art: Copyright 1988 The Walt Disney Company & Amblin Entertainment

After their association on *The Thief and the Cobbler*, Richard Williams asked Natwick to train the animators on *Roger Rabbit* and to deal with some old pals.

Photo & Lithographs: Courtesy Circle Gallery

Charleston II Art: Grim Natwick

Upon graduation from high school, Natwick left to study at the Art Institute of Chicago—the first of three such art schools he would attend—to begin the training that would prove invaluable when he began animating. His art studies in Chicago were interrupted by the Kaiser, however. "I was drafted into the American Army, but about two weeks before I was due to go to Europe, the Armistice was signed. I got out, and had about a year-and-a-half to decide, 'Now, what'll I do?'

"At that time, a music publishing company had space right in the middle of Chicago while I was taking classes at the Art Institute. This sheet music printer had an office on the eighth floor. They said, 'Listen, you're running around town getting jobs—well, we can keep you busy. Just use part of our space that we don't use.' I used the room where their salesmen would sit and rest when they got tired of running around town, before they would go down and start working again. I thought it was a great idea—I wouldn't have to keep going around to the publisher to get jobs!"

Sheet music publishing was a major industry at the time, explains Natwick. "Everybody sat around a piano. One person in every family could knock out chords, and everybody sang. In fact, four of my brothers and sisters became either professional singers in musical comedy companies in Chicago, or else professional violinists. There was no TV or radio back in 1890, so if you could whistle, you were talented!" he laughs.

Natwick managed to make a living drawing sheet music covers in Chicago; in fact, the first sheet he illustrated was for a new song called "St. Louis Blues." But he was not content, and the artist soon phoned an old friend of his from Chicago's Art Institute who had moved to New York. Gregory LaCava, who would later become known for directing films, including a number of W.C. Fields movies, was then doing early, crude animation for William Randolph Hearst, featuring Hearst newspaper characters Krazy Kat, Happy Hooligan and Mutt and Jeff.

"Greg said, 'Hey, come out here! I've got a big apartment, and you can live with me while you look around!' Well, he met me in New York, and he had all of his relatives living with him, so temporarily, we had to sleep together in this big double bed! Greg told me he was doing animated cartoons for Hearst. I never learned how he got the job from Hearst, but he must have been a master salesman!" Natwick laughs. "Nobody knew how to animate then, but we did animate—after a fashion!

Snow White Art: Grim Natwick/Copyright 1937 Walt Disney Productions

All Betty Boop Lithographs: Copyright 1989 King Features Inc./Fleischer Studios

"William Randolph Hearst was a big, *big* colossus that had tentacles reaching from New York to California. I believe animation was first introduced into America by a Frenchman, but it was Hearst who got together a bunch of young newspaper artists. They were making 20 or 40 bucks a week, helping professional cartoon page artists, and he trained them to do animation which was very crude and primitive. He had a big staff of comic artists stretching across the U.S. Hearst was *insane* about comic characters!"

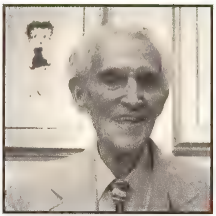
Natwick also studied at the New York School of Design, and despite his success in sheet music illustration and primitive animation, he aspired to become a realistic artist in the manner of Norman Rockwell or James Montgomery Flagg. And so, he went on to study for three years at the Fine Arts Academy in Vienna.

"I did nothing but portraits, bodies and life drawings," he says. "I used to jump on the electric train and go up the Danube, into country that hadn't changed since the 16th century, and do three or four sketches.'

When he returned to New York, animators were much in demand, and Natwick was one of the very few who had also been trained in fine art. He took a job at the Fleischer Studios, where his ability to draw the human figure proved invaluable.

"The animation studios had been trying to develop a girl character for years. All of these kids that grew up in the quickie art schools could draw rabbits and Mickey Mouse. So could I, but just by accident, because I wanted to become an illustrator."

So in 1930, Natwick worked on the first successful female cartoon star. Although Betty Boop actually started out as a dog, Natwick, inspired by "Boop-Oop-a-Doop" singer Helen Kane, gave her the eyes, personality and curves admired by generations.



Grim Natwick is still keeping company with Betty Boop as he promotes the limited edition lithographs on exhibition at Circle Galleries across the country.

Following his success at Fleischer Studios, Natwick went to work for Ub Iwerks, animating Flip the Frog. He passed up the opportunity to work for Walt Disney, but later changed his mind when he heard that Disney employees received a generous insurance policy. Although it was rumored that Walt Disney wouldn't hire anyone who had previously turned him down, the policy apparently didn't extend to Natwick. Rather than enter into a partnership with Iwerks, Natwick took the job with Disney.

At the beginning of an animation classic, Natwick submitted these early designs of Snow White which have a certain "Boop" flair to them.

When initially conceived, Betty was a *real* dog, just like her pet Bimbo.

Betty Boop Characters' Copyright 1989 King Features Inc./Fleischer Studios

At the studio, Natwick did nothing for a full year, though he was kept on the payroll. Before moving out to California, his first wife had died of tuberculosis, and so Natwick found himself a bachelor once again. With the end of Prohibition, Natwick's home became a place for movie workers to gather and socialize, including old friends like LaCava and stars of the magnitude of Douglas Fairbanks.

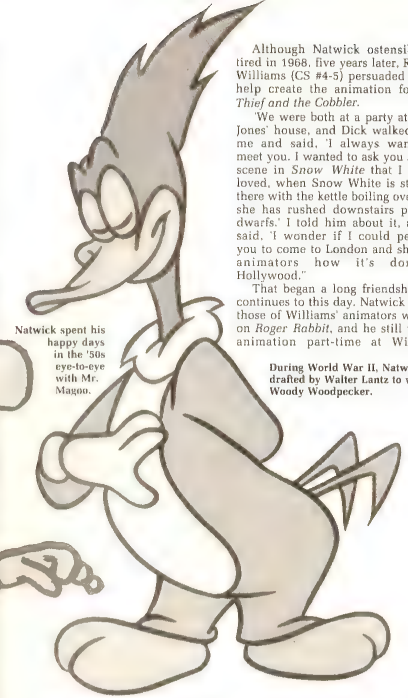
When Natwick finally did get an assignment from Disney, however, it was a dandy: He was to lead a team of animators in developing a character called Snow White. Disney's people first attempted to use rotoscoping, but it proved less than successful. Natwick, though, fell back on eight years of art training and his knowledge of the human body to create a realistic Snow White, and he spent the next two years working on the landmark film.

Natwick had established himself as a master of his craft by this time, and his services were very much in demand in the industry, which had rapidly mushroomed.

"By World War II, animation had become more than a lot of kids who liked to draw," he notes. Natwick went to work for an old co-worker, Walter Lantz (STARLOG #96), who was achieving success with his own Woody Woodpecker; in the 1950s, Natwick was working on Mr. Magoo for UPA.

Mr Magoo Art Copyright 1990 UPA

Natwick spent his happy days in the '50s eye-to-eye with Mr. Magoo.



Woody Woodpecker (1945) Art Copyright 1987 Walter Lantz Productions Inc.

During World War II, Natwick was drafted by Walter Lantz to work on Woody Woodpecker.

Although Natwick ostensibly retired in 1968, five years later, Richard Williams (CS #4-5) persuaded him to help create the animation for *The Thief and the Cobbler*.

"We were both at a party at Chuck Jones' house, and Dick walked up to me and said, 'I always wanted to meet you. I wanted to ask you about a scene in *Snow White* that I always loved, when Snow White is standing there with the kettle boiling over, after she has rushed downstairs past the dwarfs.' I told him about it, and he said, 'I wonder if I could persuade you to come to London and show my animators how it's done in Hollywood."

That began a long friendship that continues to this day. Natwick trained those of Williams' animators working on *Roger Rabbit*, and he still teaches animation part-time at Williams' London studio. "If he had his way, Dick would still have me over there now!" Natwick laughs.

Natwick continues in semi-retirement, alternating between homes in Missouri and California, but he still gives lectures and works on his oil paintings at home. Truly a living legend, his place in film history is assured, and his legacy will be felt as long as there is animation.

In fact, he was confronted with his own influence recently by Williams' grandson. The boy was telling him about a cartoon he had seen, in which a hungry dog was sitting by a barber's chair. "Sometimes my razor slips," the barber says.

'I remember that gag!" Grim Natwick told him. 'I created it when I was working for William Randolph Hearst on *Happy Hooligan*!"

Guardians

(continued from page 55)

its "future" will deal with the second.

"I've been given a great deal of leeway in developing this future—including, for example, a new Phoenix—because of this attitude," he notes. "In the Marvel version of the Multiverse, there *is no one* future, but a whole lot of possible futures. It's like taking a *What If?* story and expanding it, perhaps; this *is* the Marvel Universe, but it may not be the future any of the characters of Marvel's present will experience. You don't want to tie current creators down to *your* future and create what I call an 'Adult Legion syndrome.' Jim Shooter's Adult Legion stories tied the hands of other Legion scripters for years. We don't want to do that with the *Guardians of the Galaxy*. Tom, Mark Gruenwald, Craig and I all agreed we didn't want that. It's still the real Marvel Universe—just an alternative future."

One further point Valentino insists on: This is not science fiction. "My personal definition of science fiction is just that—fiction about science," he stresses. "When you introduce things like faster-than-light travel and teleportation, you're no longer dealing with SF...that's not good science. It's speculative fiction, or whatever you want to call it. I'm a real purist. This is not SF; it's a hard-hitting, balls-out, fast-action superhero series that just happens to be set in space, 1,000 years in the future as opposed to in the present in New York City. It's like an old Stan Lee-Jack Kirby comic: On page 1 of #1, the Guardians are getting blown up, and it picks up steam from there. We hit the ground running at 100 miles per hour every issue, and on the last page, we drop you over the cliff, hanging until next time. Every single issue will be that way."

And anyway, Valentino says, the important thing is always the story, not the genre. "Dave Sim used to say there are writer/artists and artist/writers. He always considered himself a writer/artist; to him, writing was more important than drawing. We would discuss this, and I would say I consider myself a raconteur, a storyteller to whom the art and the writing are equally important. I don't see one taking precedence. If I were in the Stone Age, I would be the guy sitting around the fire telling stories and scratching pictures in the sand while I did it. The story should either excite or entice you, make you laugh, cry, think—elicit some sort of response. And if I do my job, *Guardians of the Galaxy* will do *all* those things."

Squalor

(continued from page 48)

plot works. It's also the story of somebody trying to come to terms with the world, trying to figure out how it works. *Steppenwolf* by Herman Hesse is a similar story of self-healing and self-exploration and finding out that people don't necessarily have one particular personality or set of perceptions. And in *The Tao of Physics*, the author compares quantum mechanics to Hindu philosophy.

"That's one of the fun things about the medium. Many things can be done that haven't been done—although it's opening up now."

One of the things that is about to open up is the first continuing series presented by First in several years. Apparently, the time was right. "I've signed a contract to do a monthly series for them, which will probably be called *Meta-4*," he says, referring to the book's working title. If that sounds more like straightforward superheroics, be forewarned. "It will be different from *Squalor* but exactly the same. A little more linear, but equally as interesting.

"It's a semi-whimsical, sometimes dramatic, sometimes comic, sometimes tragic exploration of many New Age things all over the world, anything from UFO abductions to the Loch Ness Monster," he explains. As for the plot, "it centers around four characters who went into a coma during the Harmonic Convergence."

For the uninitiated, Petrucha elaborates. "There was a big to-do in 1987 where the planets had aligned in a certain way. All these people around the world gathered to meditate for world peace in order to avoid the coming catastrophes. These four people go into a coma and awaken five years later to discover they have certain natural abilities enhanced in various ways.

"One of the reasons I'm doing the series is because I'm fascinated with what people believe." And what does *he* believe? "I'm all for anything that gets people meditating. But I take a lot of it with a very heavy grain of salt."

As to whether the continuing (or past? or current?) adventures of Harry Keller will be appearing on a monthly basis, Stefan Petrucha confesses, "I certainly hope so. I had originally planned it as an on-going series, so I have many plot ideas. I think there's an audience for *Squalor*. I think there's a group of people that will really get into it. But I don't know how big the group is."

Only time will tell.

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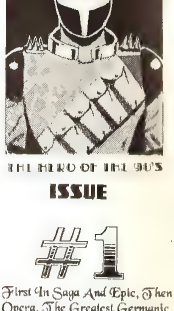

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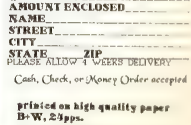

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Kellerman

(continued from page 57)

asked to expound on that reference.

Does she mind not being able to match wits with a talking moose? "No," she fires back, making light of the question. "They already made *The Bear*, that's why we decided not to do it. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* was the definitive mix of live-action and animation, and we're not animated. There would have been no point in trying to remake the cartoon series, because they already made it and they did it great. This was always intended to be a story about Boris and Natasha. You really get to know them. We wanted to make them human."

There would be no movie without Natasha's beloved Boris Badenov, of course, and Kellerman thinks that Dave Thomas—whom she refers to as "Dave Thomas, the curmudgeon"—filled Badenov's pint-size black shoes to a T. "Dave was great. I really enjoyed working with him. He made a big contribution to the film. He's very funny and was a wonderful help as far as adding new ideas. We only snapped at each other once the whole picture. I've always liked short guys. Dave is not as short as Boris, and my hair is not as long as Natasha's, but I think we captured the feeling."

Asked to share her feelings about director Charles Martin Smith, Kellerman replies, "He's excellent. He's such a good actor himself. He was wonderful in keeping us truthful and keeping an eye on the script's slapstick humor.

"He gave the film a unique kind of feeling. He really wanted to remain true to the cartoons' spirit, to capture their sense of humor."

Aside from acting (and her roles in other genre projects, which she discusses in STARLOG #154), Kellerman is also a vocalist. Coincidentally, she was working on an album with rhythm and blues singer-producer Bobby Womack when Krane suggested that they work up a song for *Boris & Natasha*. Co-writer Linda Favilla (who makes an appearance in the film as a hair salon worker), wrote the lyrics for the Womack tune, entitled "Good to Be Bad," a rock and roll number that Kellerman sings over the film's end credits.

For Kellerman, Natasha was a "wonderful role; I was thrilled to get to play it." As for *Boris & Natasha*, she has seen the final cut and has high praise—and hopes—for it. "I think it's delightful," she concludes. "I hope it will appeal to both adults and kids, and I hope the kids will want to see it three or four times. [In her accent again] I vant it to be big, big hit."

Foray

(continued from page 62)

on your hands, be happy. Accept it and go on and do something else."

June Foray's next big-screen appearance is her cameo in the Charles Martin Smith-directed *Boris & Natasha*. "I wanted to do it in a Natasha voice and say, 'Hey, look, I am from Pottsylvania too, dollink,' because maybe people wouldn't recognize me and the joke would not have been there unless there was some sort of an identification." That idea was nixed, but it was decided Foray could use the Brooklyn-accented voice of the "Fractured Fairy Tale" princess instead.

Aside from her role, Foray was engaged to coach star Sally Kellerman. "She went to New York and looked at six hours of *Bullwinkle* at the Museum of Broadcasting. Then, I stopped at her house and talked into a tape recorder as Natasha. I would say, 'Well, she was in luff wit Borees and anytink Borees said was hokay wit her.' Sally said she got more out of just talking to me and getting the feeling of Natasha than seeing all of the episodes."

The role of Boris Badenov went to *SCTV*'s Dave Thomas, but June Foray sees the ideal live-action Boris in actor Bob Hoskins. "Didn't he look exactly like Boris in *Roger Rabbit* when he had his hat on?" she asks. "At the big party for the screening of *Roger Rabbit*, I met Bob Hoskins and told him how much I enjoyed his work, and so forth, and when we stood up, he was only *this much* taller than I am! He's a little short fellow and he would have been *ideal*."

(According to some sources, Hoskins was approached for the role but was hesitant to do another animation-oriented part so soon after *Roger Rabbit*.)

What looms in the future for the busy actress?

"I just keep pooping along, you know," she says. "I think I'm going to do voices on a new *Quack Tales* feature film. I do *Gummi Bears* one day and *Smurfs* is starting up again. So, I keep busy."

June Foray appears to be a Hollywood rarity: a performer truly satisfied with her career. And with the everlasting appeal of Rocky and Bullwinkle, she can be assured that her signature role will always find a new young audience.

But she adds with a chuckle, "As Bill Scott said when younger kids came over to him saying they like the *Bullwinkle* show, 'We've corrupted *another* generation!' "

Apes

(continued from page 22)

In that mini-series, *Ape Nation*, a Newcomer slave ship accidentally hits a time curve and finds itself, where else, on the planet of the apes.

"What I liked about *Alien Nation* is the interaction between the two diverse characters, which is probably what everybody else likes about it," says Marshall. "What this mini-series will try to do is pick up some of that same appeal, except that instead of being a human, the other character will be an ape. These two characters will develop a buddy relationship, much like *Alien Nation*. They'll be faced with stopping an army of humans, gorillas and Newcomers, all of whom are being led by General Ollo.

"The way I look at it is that you've got this slave race. There are *no* resources being harvested on the planet of the apes and there's nothing for these slaves to do, so I figured that it would be a logical off-shoot that they would be used for an army, the only job open. So, they're a part of this vast army that's wiping out everything on a direct path to Ape City. Many of the characters from *Planet of the Apes* will be popping up, mostly in small roles. They know that this army is coming and they're trying to do something about it, but they don't have the ape power to stop them. Basically, though, it's the story of two characters. The ape's name is Heston, and it's pretty obvious where that came from, and the alien is named Caan, which I thought was a nice tribute to James Caan from the original movie. I'm trying to pick up the buddy quality that appealed to me about *Alien Nation* and work that in, too.

"I've always been a fan of weird crossovers," he adds, "and it's always a challenge to pull it off and not have people go, 'Oh, that's the *dumbest* thing I've ever heard.' If we can get the characters together in a way that works for everybody, we can tell a real good story."

He's obviously confident that he can, as he points out that *Ape Nation* concludes with everything returned to status quo, while leaving the door wide open for another, very different mini-series that might follow. *Planet of the Apes*, it would seem, has sparked his imagination.

"It's really exciting to come back to something like *Planet of the Apes*," Charles Marshall admits, "although I don't know what the kids who aren't that familiar with it are going to think. It's more of a baby boomer kind of thing anyway; a real nostalgic kick. But I'm glad we're doing *Planet of the Apes*, and we're doing it *right*."

COMICS screen

These characters are being developed for other media. *All* projects are live-action unless specified. Those marked by an asterisk have changed status since last listing. **Attn. all pros:** Clarifications & other info to be added to this list are cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016.

The Addams Family. Film. Orion. Cher *may* play Morticia.

The Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hamsters. Animated series. Rankin-Bass, producers.

The Adventures of Pico and Columbus. Animated feature from Bavaria Film. Phil Nibbelink, directing animator; Scott Santoro, special FX.

The Airtight Garage. Animated film of Moebius saga. Moscow's Soyuzmultfilm Studios, North American Trading Co. & Starwatcher Graphics, co-producers. Script: Randy Lofficier. In production.

The American. Film. Joel Silver, producer. Script: Mark Verheiden.

American Flagg! Film.

* **An American Tail.** Film sequel due fall 1991. TV series may follow. HB.

* **Annie.** Film may shoot April 1990. Lewis Gilbert, director. Musical sequel *Annie II: Miss Hannigan's Revenge* closed in January. (see article)

Ant-Man. Film.

* **Archie.** Film. *Archie & Veronica.* Targeted for summer 1991. Warner Bros. Script: Jeff Boam. Joel Schumacher, director. Archie: Corey Haim. Also NBC TV movie, *To Riverdale & Back.* DIC. Script: Evan Katz. Exec producers: Tom Patchett, Andy Heyward.

Arzach. Film of Moebius hero. Kirk Thatcher, producer.

The Avengers. Film. John Steed. Script: Sam Hamm.

Babar. 52 half-hour shows air on HBO. Nelvana.

Batman. Sequels planned. Script: Sam Hamm.

Beetle Bailey. Film. Also animated TV special. Script: Hank Saroyan.

Beetlejuice. Animated Saturday a.m. series on ABC & video.

Blackhawk. Film.

Blade. Film. Script: Lee Goldberg & William Rabkin.

Blondie. CBS animated special.

James Bond. Animated series, *Adventures of James Bond Jr.*

Betty Boop. Animated half-hour special, *Betty Boop's Hollywood Mystery,* airs on CBS soon. Film. Richard Fleischer, director.

Brenda Starr, Reporter. Theatrical release uncertain.

Bugs Bunny. New syndicated animated series with young Warner characters, *Tiny Toon Adventures.* Debuts fall '90.

* **Bullwinkle.** *Boris & Natasha,* with Sally Kellerman & Dave Thomas. Script: Charles Fradin. Charles Martin-Smith, director. Now out. (see article)

* **Captain America.** Film. Script: Stephen Tolkin. Albert Pyun, director. Captain America: Matt Salinger. Release delayed to August.

* **Captain Planet.** Animated series featuring environmental superheroes.

Cathy. Animated TV specials on CBS.

Charlie Chan. Film. Chan: B.D. Wong. Fred Levinson, director. Gene Kirkwood, John Hyde, producers.

Chicken Man. Animated series based on Dick Orkin's '70s radio spoofs. Calico.

Chip & Dale. *Rescue Rangers* airs on Disney Channel & in syndication. Animated film due 1991.

* **City of Darkness.** Film. *Not* an adaptation. Original script: Patrick Cirillo & Joe Gayton. Comics superhero & supervillain enter real world for epic battle. Michael Douglas, Rick Bieber, producers. Columbia.

Conan. Film. *Conan III* "announced" by Conan Licensing.

Cracked. Superhero parody movie in development.

Deathlok. Film.

Delta Tenn. TV movie. Shannon Tweed stars. Touchstone TV for NBC.

* **Dick Tracy.** Film. Touchstone. Warren Beatty, director & star. June '90 release. Sequel planned. (see article)

* **Dinosaurs for Hire.** Live action or animated project.

COMICS REPORTER

The hysteria hasn't ended. *Batman* is already on video, yet the rumors keep swirling about the sequel. These reports range from the truly bizarre to the incredibly batty. But here are 10 facts—all detailed, all confirmed, all, it seems, true.

1. There *will* be a *Batman II.* (Now, that was an easy one!)

2. Warner Bros. will release the sequel. Just exactly when really depends on numerous factors.

3. Sam Hamm—who co-wrote the original—is writing a script which *may* be the one used for this sequel.

4. Tim Burton—who directed the first film—will be involved in the follow-up in some creative production capacity. He will probably *not* direct.

5. Peter Guber and Jon Peters—who produced *Batman*—will *not* encore. In a much-reported move in 1989, Sony hired the duo to run Columbia Pictures. Needless to say, they won't be working on this Warner Bros. release.

6. Despite numerous rumors, the villain will probably *not* be the Penguin. It's not firmly decided, but the Catwoman is the number one candidate.

10 Facts About "Batman II"

Batman Photo: Murray Close/Trademark & Copyright 1989 DC Comics/Courtesy Warner Bros.

7. Only three actors from the first movies signed contracts to appear in two subsequent Bat-films. (This doesn't mean they absolutely will, but they *are* contractually bound). They are: Pat Hingle, who plays Commissioner James Gordon...

8. Billy Dee Williams, who portrays D.A. Harvey Dent (and possibly at some point, Dent's criminal alter-ego, Two Face)...

9. And Michael Gough, who plays Alfred. *No* other actors have signed contracts with sequel options. (This is not to say that other actors might not return, but there would have to be new—and presumably expensive—contractual negotiations).

10. Michael Keaton is not signed for the sequel. However, he has stated he's willing to do the movie if he likes the script.

—David McDonnell

Jetsons Art: Copyright 1989 Universal City Studios & Hanna-Barbera Productions

That lovable space-age family make their theatrical debut this summer with *Jetsons: The Movie*. This animated feature is the first of several planned teamings between Universal Pictures and Hanna-Barbera.

DNAgents. Film. UA.

Doc Savage. Film.

Dr. Strange. Film. Script: Bob Gale. Looking for studio. Separate TV movie discussed.

Droopy. Will co-star with son Dribble in *Tom & Jerry Kids*, HB animated series for TBS.

Evangeline. Film. Funnybook Films.

Fantastic Four. Film. Neue Constantin. Bernard Eichinger, producer.

The Far Side. Film. Alan Rudolph, director. Shopping for studio.

Felix the Cat. Animated film. Produced, still no release.

The Fish Police. Animated series.

*** The Flash**. Film. Guber-Peters. CBS is discussing TV series on Barry Allen Flash for fall.

The Flintstones. Film. Fred: John Goodman. Universal with Amblin Entertainment.

Fu Manchu. Film. Secret *of Fu Manchu*. David Carradine stars.

Garfield. Saturday a.m. series, *Garfield & Friends*, on CBS.

Ghost Rider. Film. New Line Cinema.

*** The Green Hornet**. Film. Universal. Being written.

Green Lantern. Film. Joel Silver, producer. Being written.

Grimjack. Film.

Gumby. Film.

He-Man. *New Adventures of He-Man*, a 65-episode series, due fall 1990. LBS Communications.

Honkytonk Sue. Film. Optioned by Goldie Hawn.

*** Human Target**. TV series pilot. ABC.

*** The Incredible Hulk**. TV movie, *The Death of the Incredible Hulk*. Recently aired. *Rebirth of the Hulk* TV movie mulled.

Inspector Gadget. Live-action half-hour TV series based on animated character. DIC. For Family Channel.

Iron Man. Film.

*** The Jetsons**. Animated film. HB/Universal. Out July 1990.

*** Jo Jo**. Film. Now set in the Amazon. Lee Caplin, producer. Story: Mike Chapman.

Jonny Quest. Film. Universal.

Judge Dredd. Film. Script: Howard Chaykin. Charles Lippincott, producer.

*** Justice League**. TV movie pilot (now *two* hours). NBC. Lorimar.

*** Kaanga**. Film. Script: Geoffrey Edwards, Sam Bernard. Edwards, director. Lee Caplin, Blake Edwards, Tony Adams, producers.

Kaptain Keen & Ko. Planned animated series. Rankin-Bass.

*** Lt. Blueberry**. Film. Walter Hill, director.

Li'l Abner. Live-action TV series. Max & Michaeline Keller, producers. Dave Bell & Herbert Krosney, producers, plan animated show & musical.

Little Nemo in Slumberland. Animated film. TMS Ent.

The Lone Ranger. Syndicated half-hour TV series for fall 1990. Also separate live-action film. John Landis, director. Universal.

Lone Wolf & Cub. Film. Edward Pressman, producer. Script: Bill Wisher.

*** Lucky Luke**. TV series (for international broadcast). Terence Hill, star. Silvio Berlusconi Communications. 10 episodes. To begin filming in U.S. in June.

MacDoodle Street. Film. Columbia. Based on Mark Alan Stamaty's *Village Voice* strip.

*** MAD Magazine**. CBS special. HB. Unfinished. Dead?

Mai the Psychic Girl. Film. Writer/producer Larry Wilson. Co-producer: Walter Hill. Carolco.

Mandrake. Film. Italy's Pentafilm.

The Mask. Film.

Mickey Mouse. Animated featurette "The Prince & the Pauper" due out fall '90.

Mr. Jigsaw. Ron Fortier-Gary Kato character optioned for animation by Rankin-Bass.

Mr. Magoo. Film. Steven Tisch, producer. Also animated film with niece, Megan Magoo.

Mr. X. Film. Jim Cash & Jack Epps, producers.

My Secret Identity. Syndicated sitcom with Ultraman airing.

Nancy. *Nancy The Movie*. Peter Muller, producer.

Negative Man. New superhero created by Bob Kane. Live-action series. Nelvana.

Neil the Horse. Animation/live-action project.

Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD. Film. Stephen Herek, director. Script: Greg Pruss.

Joe Palooka. Musical.

The Phantom. Film. Bruce Sherlock, Peter Sioquist, John Torv, Rodney Price, producers. Script: Ken Shadie. *Phantom* creator Lee Falk, consultant. Joel Schumacher *may* direct.

Plastic Man. Film. Script: Charles Gale. Warner Bros. Possible star: Pee-wee Herman.

The Prowler. Film. Funnybook Films.

The Punisher. Film. Dolph Lundgren stars. Mark Goldblatt, director. Release delayed.

Radio Boy. Animated. Rankin-Bass.

Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman. Film. *May* star Jim Belushi. Script: creator David Boswell. Matt Weisman, Joseph Loeb II, producers.

*** Richie Rich**. Film. Fred Savage to star in film to start shooting April. Joel Silver, John Davis, producers.

*** RoboCop**. Sequel. Script: Frank Miller & Walon Green. Irv Kershner, director. Peter Weller & Nancy Allen return. Due out June. Animated *Marvel Universe* may spin off solo Robo series.

The Rocketeer. Film. Disney. Bill Dear, director. Script: Danny Bilson & Paul De Meo.

*** Roger Rabbit**. "Rollercoaster Rabbit" to debut with *Dick Tracy* in June.

Sally Forth. Universal sitcom.

Secret Agent X-9. Animated film.

Sgt. Preston of the Yukon. TV revival projected.

*** Sgt. Rock**. Film. Rock: Bruce Willis. John McTiernan, director. Joel Silver, producer. Script: Steven de Souza & David Peoples. Targeted for 1991.

The Shadow. Film. Script: Howard Franklin. Martin Bregman, producer.

*** The She-Hulk**. One-hour TV series ordered for possible 1991 revolving segment ABC series.

The Simpsons. Animated series airs on FBC featuring Matt Groening's characters.

*** Spider-Man**. Film. Script: Neil Ruttenberg & Joseph Goldman. Due X-mas '90. Animated *Marvel Universe* segment continues. Scripts ordered for possible 1991 revolving segment ABC series.

Sub-Mariner. Film.

*** Suicide Squad**. CBS TV pilot. Lorimar/Warner Bros.

Superboy. Syndicated TV series now airing.

Superman. *Superman V???*

*** Swamp Thing**. Half-hour TV series debuts on USA Network in July. 13 episodes.

*** Tales from the Crypt**. HBO series. 19 new episodes. Directors include Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bob Zemeckis.

*** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**. Animated series in syndication. Separate CBS animated series for fall '90. Live-action film now out. (see article)

*** Terry & the Pirates**. Film. Script: Jules Feiffer. Gene Kirkwood, John Hyde, producers. Stan Weston, exec producer. Sylvester Stallone *may* star.

Thor. Animated series.

Time Beavers. Animated TV series. Kushner-Locke.

Tin-Tin. Film. Amblin.

*** Tom & Jerry**. Animated film put on hold. New animated 13-episode *Tom & Jerry Kids* for TBS. Due fall '90.

Trouble with Girls. Film. 20th Century Fox & Funnybook Films. Script: Will Jacobs & Gerard Jones. Matt Pepler, Neal Tabachnick, producers.

*** Valentina**. 13-episode half-hour TV series. Stars Demetra Hampton. Retsinalis Production.

Vampirella. Film. Writer/director Jim Wynorski plans two films to shoot back-to-back.

V for Vendetta. Film. Warner.

WARP. Film. Script: Mark Victor & Michael Grais, producers.

*** Watchmen**. Film. Script: Sam Hamm. Joel Silver, producer. Terry Gilliam is back with project as director. 20th Century Fox no longer involved. Looking for studio.

Wizard of Id. Film. Script: Steven de Souza, Dana Olsen. David & Jerry Zucker to direct.

Wolverine. Film. Would end with character joining X-Men.

Wonder Woman. TV series.

Zen, Intergalactic Ninja. Film. Animated series. Surge Licensing. Scripts: Steven Stern.

Zippyvision. Film. Script: Bill Griffith & Diane Noomin. Features Zippy the Pinhead.

Zorro. Half-hour TV series airs on Family Channel. Zorro: Duncan Regehr.

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